

DELL

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A broiling summer day, the teeming city
on the lake—passion, violence, lust and
hate—the new novel by the bestselling
author of *L.A. 46*

CHICAGO



DAY KEENE

15

**The sun hung heavy.
The breeze off the lake
was hot.
Chicago sweltered. . . .**

In the apartments in the old brownstone mansion,
the tenants wore as little as was decent. . . .

They heard the commotion in the blonde's
apartment, the drunken laughter, the
occasional screams.

But in a city like Chicago, you don't
interfere with your neighbors. . . .

Anyhow, not until the screaming bugs you
so bad, you know you have to do something. . . .

**A TENSE, TAUT NOVEL OF LOVE, SEX AND
TANGLED LIVES THAT COULD HAPPEN ONLY
IN CHICAGO!**

CHICAGO 11

DAY KEENE

A DELL BOOK / AN ORIGINAL NOVEL

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Queen and guttersnipe of cities, cynosure and cesspool of the world: Not if I had a hundred tongues, everyone shouting a different language in a different key, could I do justice to her splendid chaos. The most beautiful and the most squalid, girdled with a twofold zone of parks and slums; where the keen air from lake and prairie is ever in the nostrils and stench of foul smoke is never out of the throat; the great port a thousand miles from the sea; the great mart which gathers up with one hand the corn and cattle of the West and deals out from the other the merchandise of the East; widely and generously planned with streets of twenty miles in length, where it is not safe to walk at night; where women ride straddle wise and millionaires dine at midday on the Sabbath; the chosen seat of cut-throat commerce and munificent patronage of art; the most American of American cities and yet the most mongrel; the second American city on the Globe, the fifth German city, the third Swedish, the second Polish, with an Irish population second only to Boston; the first and only veritable Babel of the age; all of which twenty-five years ago was a heap of smoking ashes. Where in all the world can words be found for this miracle of paradox and incongruity? . . .

G. W. STEEVENS
British Tourist
June 4, 1896

BOOK ONE

CHAPTER 1

By the shore of Gitche Gumee,
By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
At the door of his wigwam,
In the pleasant Summer morning,
Hiawatha stood and waited.

All the air was full of freshness,
All the earth was bright and joyous. . . .

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW
The Song of Hiawatha

It was the season for heat. The past few days had been warm. The last of the snow was melted. The lilac and the snowball bushes were in bloom. Sunday morning dawned hot and clear, with a soft breeze off the water helping to dilute, if not dispel, the reek of the spent gasoline fumes and other wastes being exuded from the metallic rivers of outbound cars flowing swiftly along the Outer Drive and the other networks of arterial highways transecting the onetime sparsely populated Ojibway Indian village on the south shore of Lake Michigan.

The building that was to play a large part in that day's news was plainly visible to the occupants of the cars on the Outer Drive, although, dwarfed as it was by its background of the towering apartment buildings and hotels of Chicago's Near North Side, it is doubtful that any of them noticed it.

The architecture was early Rhine, a form of self-aggrandizement made popular in the United States a few years before the era of the "Merry Widow Waltz" by the homesick brewers of Milwaukee who'd grown wealthy beyond their dreams of avarice on cheap labor and five-cent beer.

According to Miss Mary Daly, one of the three unmarried high-school teachers who shared a third-floor apartment in the building and who was writing a social history of Chicago

as her thesis for a Ph.D., the structure had an interesting past. She claimed that the brownstone mansion, complete with turrets and balconies and minarets, with a three-story high octagonal entrance hall, was an exact duplicate of the lake-front Rhenish castle built in the eighties by the late Potter Palmer. The house, along with various ropes of pearls and diamonds and the Palmer House Hotel, was a wedding gift from him to his twenty-one-year-old bride.

As in the original, in its early days, a caller would be subjected to an unforgettable experience. After the calling card had been accepted by one of the butlers in residence, and passed down an assembly line of some twenty-odd footmen, maids and social secretaries, wonderful things happened. Depending on the reason for the call, the caller would be escorted into a French drawing room, a Spanish music room, an English dining room or down a Moorish corridor into a Turkish, a Greek or a Japanese parlor. Or, if the call happened to be of a more intimate nature, the caller was directed to one of the two private elevators and carried at the breathtaking speed of two miles an hour up to the huge master bedroom, where the first mistress of the house had composed herself for sleep, or for whatever activity she had in mind at the moment, in a gold cherub-encrusted Louis XV bed reputed to be ten feet high.

There had also been a grand ballroom, a formal banquet hall and a rooftop solarium.

According to Miss Daly's research, the original builder had been one of the early hog butchers, a multimillionaire, whose wife, of plebeian ancestry but with illusions of social grandeur, had thought that a proper setting for her charms and the musicales and soirées she meant to give would enable her to crash the sacrosanct preserves of the established local "Four Hundred."

She was young and beautiful and gracious. She might have succeeded. Unfortunately, her husband, twice her age and desperately in love with her, wanted to adorn her person with more and more expensive gewgaws, so he'd forsaken the business he knew best for the perils of the stock market.

For a time he'd been very successful. He'd even been able to charter a private train to carry a party of friends to New York to attend the first automobile show in the United

States, which was staged in Madison Square Garden in the Year of Our Lord 1900. There, impressed by the noisy and horse-terrorizing machines which skilled chauffeurs raced around barrels and up ramps to the roof at the incredible speed of eight miles an hour, he'd purchased a phaeton, a Stanhope, a brougham and a Victoria to add to their growing ménage on what was now being called the "Gold Coast."

Then, on a day in May a short two years later, the former hog butcher was caught short in a squeeze play for control of the Northern Pacific. Having lost his entire fortune, he'd returned home for consolation and had gone up to his wife's boudoir without using the regular channels. There he found her not only cognizant of the news but, clad only in a string of emeralds and lying on the gold-encrusted bed, she was consoling and being consoled by the equally nude and very handsome young chauffeur whom he'd imported to pilot his desolate wife's Stanley Steamer.

Coming as it did so soon after the loss of his fortune, the social faux pas had been too great for the man to bear. So he forgot the amenities for the moment and made history by killing his wife and her lover with one well placed bullet from the Navy Colt he always carried with him before retiring to his mahogany-paneled study and putting a second shot through his own head.

Hundreds of other men had killed hundreds of other wives who'd been caught *in flagrante delicto*. But history had been made because it was the first time in Chicago that an outraged husband had killed a chauffeur. So when the tobacco-chewing coroner presiding over the inquest had rendered a verdict of "justifiable homicide of wife and chauffeur and suicide while of unsound mind," he'd been obliged to ask one of the reporters present how to spell the then unfamiliar word.

Since that time the brownstone structure had led a varied existence. Even in those days of the robber barons, few men had been wealthy enough to maintain and staff such a structure as a private dwelling and the slowly aging mansion had passed through many hands.

It had been home to a wheat speculator and a Johnny-come-lately millionaire who'd made his money in real estate. It had been operated as a swank gambling casino, a boarding school for refined young ladies, a house for not so refined

young ladies, and, during the early Prohibition years, as a society speakeasy.

However, with the growing conception that no matter how well it might pay, domestic service was menial, with the continuing trend toward coeducational institutions, with the fierce competition offered the professional *filles de joie* by the amateur *lorettes* who had entered the field, with the outlawing of even quasilegal gambling, and with the eventual return of the corner tavern, there'd come a time when the building could no longer be staffed as a private dwelling, or profitably operated in any of the endeavors for which it had been used.

For years, all through the Depression, it had stood neglected and forgotten by everyone but the tax collector. Then, shortly after the beginning of World War II, an enterprising real-estate developer, with an eye to future possible land value, had turned it into a taxpaying entity by the simple expedient of gutting the interior, replacing the archaic elevators with an ornate three-story spiral staircase and remodeling the brownstone shell into twelve, at the time very modern, one- and two-bedroom apartments.

The apartment rentals were high, but, because of their proximity to both the Loop and the Lake, they'd been in constant demand for years.

Now, unfortunately for the current tenants, and fortunately for the heirs of the entrepreneur who had remodeled the building and who had managed to maintain title, land values in the area had risen so high that the occupants were under notice to vacate and, shortly after the first of July, the former private dwelling was scheduled to be demolished so that its relatively small ground site could become part of a twenty-four-story multimillion dollar ultramodern cooperative apartment complex.

CHAPTER 2

There was little pedestrian traffic on the street. As Mary Daly remembered, that was normal for a Sunday. This section of Chicago hadn't changed. The only difference she noticed from the days when she'd been a girl was that there seemed to be fewer derelicts sleeping off their drunks of the night before in the dead-end areaways and debris-cluttered doorways of the closed business houses, occasional pawnshop, and cheap nightclub.

Of course, in those days she'd always been afraid one of the drunks might be her father.

The weatherman had been right. He'd said the Memorial Day weekend would be hot. Even this early in the morning it had to be close to ninety—with the worst heat of the day still to come.

She used a corner of the black lace mantilla covering her hair to pat at the film of perspiration on her cheeks. Instead of walking to Holy Name Cathedral, she should have driven. Better still, she should have gone to the Dunes with Ann and Cora.

The black-haired high-school teacher walked on down the semideserted street, the click of her high heels sounding unnaturally loud in the Sabbath silence. When she looked back on it, her early girlhood (at least all of it that she would allow herself to remember) had been strictly early James T. Farrell. A foul-mouthed Farrell addicted to four-letter words. In this section of Chicago, the section in which she'd been born, with its admixture of pimps and whores and drunks, cheap nightclubs, cheaper theatrical hotels, and grimy light-housekeeping rooms, the novelist's southside Studs Lonigan would have been a *bon vivant* and the unsavory characters with whom he consorted the élite of the country-club set.

She could remember dressing for Mass and having her mother warn her, "And if you should happen to see your father on the way home, don't even talk to the son of a bitch. We're doing fine on relief. And when you finally finish Normal School and begin to teach and we move into that fine apartment we're going to have, we don't want any drunken old bum coming around begging a few dollars for a bottle and embarrassing us in front of our new neighbors."

The light on the next corner was red. As Mary waited for it to change to permit the flow of nonexistent traffic, a middle-aged pedestrian coming along the side street paused to admire the lush body modestly sheathed in a becoming white dress.

"Hi," he offered, tentatively.

"Drop dead," the young woman said and returned to trying to equate her mother's reasoning.

Even as a schoolgirl, she'd thought it rather ludicrous that her mother should feel the way she did about her father, setting herself up as his judge. This when she seldom went to Mass, never to Confession, drank as much, or more, than he did, and wasn't above supplementing their relief check by accepting payment for favors received from the casual male friends she met in the bars along the street and allowed to accompany her home to whatever roach-infested rooms they happened to be occupying at the time.

Fortunately, if "fortunate" was the word, her father had died when she was fourteen and her mother two years later. She'd prayed for and said Rosaries for both, but, though it might be a mortal sin on her conscience, she hadn't been able to cry on either occasion.

It could be Jim was right. It could be something was missing in her emotional and biological make-up.

"You're cold," the psychology teacher had accused her. I don't believe you're capable of love. All you really give a good goddamn about is your job and those frigging degrees you're always working toward."

All this because she had refused to accompany him to a resort on Eagle River where he had hoped to enjoy a pleasant weekend having prenuptial relations with her.

Mary walked on through the heat. However, she didn't think she was cold. At least she hoped she wasn't. One corner of her mouth tugged down in a wry smile. She knew she

was capable of love. She loved God. She loved Jesus. She loved the Sister of Mercy who had taken her in after her mother had died and had made certain that she finished her education.

And when the right man came along, she could love him. Any way he wanted her to love him. Her former fiancé would never know how close he'd come to his goal. If instead of quarreling with her he'd kept on kissing her, or had gotten his hand a half inch higher, anything could have happened. She still didn't know why it hadn't.

But facts were facts. She was twenty-six years old. She would be twenty-seven in September, and she had broken up with the only man to whom she'd ever been engaged. It could be she'd wind up an old maid. Any number of teachers did.

When she came to the cross street on which she lived and turned east, she was rewarded by a relatively cool breeze blowing in off the lake.

Normally she attended St. Agnes. But that morning, because both Ann and Cora were out of town and she'd reached that part in her thesis covering the social mores of an era that had ended before she was born, she'd walked the additional blocks to Holy Name Cathedral.

Her research sources had been correct. There *were* chips in the granite facade of Holy Name Cathedral. Nor had she any reason to doubt they had been made by the machine-gun bullets that had ended the career of one Earl Wajciechowski, better known in the gangland circles of his day as Hymie Weiss. It should make an interesting chapter. Both Hymie and the man he'd succeeded, a onetime choir boy named Dion O'Banion, had, in their own way, been fabulous characters.

According to the research she'd done for her doctorate in sociology, O'Banion had been a swashbuckling, flower-loving, cheerful murderer who had always carried three pistols in the special pockets sewn into his custom-tailored suits and who was alleged to have killed, or have ordered killed, at least twenty-five men. As a boy he'd sung in the choir of Holy Name Cathedral. As a man he had banked a million dollars a year from his traffic in bootleg whiskey, plus the considerable profits from the flower shop he'd operated at 738 North State Street as a cover for his illicit

activities. That is, he had banked a million dollars a year until he had quarreled over a division of spoils with the Union Siciliana-dominated Johnny Torrio-Al Capone combine.

It was shortly after that when O'Banion, alone in his flower shop except for a Negro porter, had heard the front doorbell tinkle. Tenderly, almost lovingly clipping the stems from a bouquet of white chrysanthemums, he had emerged from his workshop to greet three strangers whom he'd had every reason to believe were calling for one of the floral works of art for which he was justly famous.

It had been a fatal assumption.

Later, Weiss was to claim that the killing had been planned by Torrio and Capone, but the police had never been able to obtain sufficient evidence to justify an arrest. All that was known for certain was that, when the three men left the flower shop, O'Banion was dead.

His funeral had been the talk of Chicago. Ten thousand people had followed the hearse. Twenty-five cars and trucks had been required to carry the floral tributes. And while the church had refused to allow the dead man to be buried in consecrated ground, five months after his death his body had been disinterred and reburied under circumstances that had caused an honest police official of the era to comment, "O'Banion was a thief and a murderer. But look at him now. He's buried eighty feet from a bishop."

It was a little cooler on the side street, but not much. The breeze was blowing intermittently. Mary used the corner of her mantilla as a fan.

This brought her to the reason for her morning safari. As O'Banion's second in command, Weiss had taken over his interests, including the North State Street flower shop. But he'd had little of the dead man's charm. The only good thing she'd been able to learn about him was that Little Hymie, as he was familiarly known, had been good to his mother and also deeply religious. In that respect, the scene of his demise had been fitting. Some twenty-one months after O'Banion had been killed, a fusillade of shots had splattered Little Hymie's mortal remains all over the steps and the lower facade of Holy Name Cathedral. Leaving him dead at twenty-eight, with nothing to show for his brief

career in crime except an estate valued at one million three hundred thousand dollars.

Mary's heart bled for him. There had to be a moral in the story somewhere. Perhaps, when you sin, sin big. If, as she hoped she would some day, she ever earned ten thousand dollars a year, it would take her, even at maximum salary, one hundred and thirty years to earn as much as Little Hymie had made peddling illicit beer.

She was hot. Her clothes were beginning to stick to her body. She wanted to get out of them and under a cold shower. She was glad to see the old brownstone building.

But that brought up another matter. Cora was going to Europe. Ann was getting married as soon as school was out. And she had to find another apartment in which to live, one on which the rent wasn't so high she couldn't handle it by herself.

The high-school teacher pushed open one of the big plate-glass doors and walked in, glad to be out of the sun, grateful for the relatively cool silence of the eighty-year-old octagonal three-story entrance hall that had been the one thing in the building that none of its owners had ever been able to remodel. It still seemed incredible to her that in any era of the city's growth any single owner had been wealthy enough to maintain so much structure as a private dwelling. Still, judging from the instances she'd researched, the Little Hymies and the Dion O'Banions had been novices in the art of making money. Any number of the early pioneers who had built Chicago into one of the world's largest and greatest cities had made ten times as much money, more or less honestly, than all of the hoodlums put together had stolen.

From force of habit, she glanced at the bank of mail boxes before starting up the ornate metal spiral staircase. In at least one respect the brownstone shell was still a private dwelling. After having lived in the building for three years, with two exceptions, her fellow tenants were merely names on a mailbox. Mason, Rogers, Adamowski, Anderson, Jones, Stafford, Garcia, LaTour. Names and faces, male and female, with whom she exchanged the time of day when they chanced to pass on the stairs or meet in the parking lot.

The two exceptions were Terry Jones and old Mr. La-

Tour. And no one could help knowing Terry, not when they shared a mutual living-room wall. At a conservative estimate, she or Ann or Cora had to pound on the wall or step next door and ask the blonde teenager to turn down her hi-fi or ask her guests to be a little less noisy at least twice a week. Mary blamed Terry's father more than she did Terry. The radio evangelist, currently preaching over a station south of the border due to some slight disagreement with the F.C.C., might be perfectly sincere in his attempt to preach the gospel as he saw it. But any father who would leave a motherless, sensationally beautiful sixteen-year-old high-school girl alone in a Near North Side apartment for months at a time, with nothing but charge accounts in most of the better Loop department stores, unlimited pocket money, and a late-model white Ford convertible to assuage her unsupervised loneliness was asking for trouble.

Mr. LaTour was the other exception. Mary liked the talkative old carnival man. She liked him very much. Whenever the daughter-in-law with whom he lived had to go out of town on business, she and Cora and Ann always invited him to share their Sunday brunch or dinner. Mary smiled as she searched her purse for her key, thinking of the first night they'd met him and the old man had expounded his personal philosophy.

"I look at life this way, see?" he'd told them. "All of us can't be whistle tooters or blow-off men and do the march playing a horse piano. Some of us have to be apes and reach-over men and spielers or we'd never draw enough of a scuff to keep the show on the road. So, if you'll pardon my French, what the hell? Unless we're forty-milers, when we find we have a growler tied to our tails instead of the red one we expected, why yell 'Hey, rube'? Why not take it down to the corner and fill it up with a little cool brew while we sweat out the big parade?"

Mary found her key and unlocked her door. That one had taken a bit of deciphering. But after they had gotten a thesaurus of slang from the library and found the section devoted to carnivals, they'd figured out the old man had been saying:

"We can't all be ringmasters or play a calliope. Some of us have to do the less attractive jobs. So when we find out life isn't going to be all that we expected, instead of fighting

about it, why not make the best of what we have?"

Mary started to enter her own apartment and stood in the doorway as the door of the adjoining apartment opened and her teenage neighbor emerged. Terry was carrying a beach bag and wearing a smart and expensive but very scanty pastel-green playsuit that left her attractive midriff bare and detailed every curve and anatomical division.

The teacher started to criticize the girl's costume, but refrained. She was old enough to know how much of herself she wanted to display in public. Besides, every beach along the lake would undoubtedly be dotted with similar playsuits and even more revealing bikinis. "Good morning, Terry," she greeted her youthful neighbor. "You look like you're bound for one of the beaches."

"That's right," the girl said. "I thought I'd try Oak Street first, then Clarendon. And if they're both too crowded, I may just find a quiet spot and soak up some sun."

"That's going to be difficult to do this morning, find a quiet spot along the lake."

"Probably."

The teenager closed and locked her door and started down the hall. Impelled by something in her face, the older woman put out her hand and stopped her. "What's the matter, Terry? Is there anything wrong? Is there something I can do?"

The blonde girl considered her answer. "No. There's nothing wrong. But thank you for asking, Miss Daly."

Mary watched her walk down the hall and descend the spiral stairs. If some girls were too pretty for their own good, the allegation applied to her youthful neighbor. Her big brown eyes, her honey-colored hair, her breasts, her rounded little behind, everything about her was lovely. But dressed as she was dressed, leaving little but the color of her pubic hair to male surprise, she was also a walking invitation to rape. The child might as well be wearing a flashing neon sign reading: "Here I am, boys. Come get me."

Mary was wryly amused. But then, she wasn't supposed to know anything about such matters. She was cold. She was incapable of love.

She closed and locked her door, and laid her short white gloves and her prayer book on the coffee table in the living room, then unpinned and removed the lace mantilla. Nor-

mally, even when alone, she was meticulous about her person and possessions. This morning she felt "shanty." With reason. She had been out of her mind to walk to Mass on a day like this. And all the way to Holy Name at that.

Without bothering to walk the remaining few steps into her bedroom, she peeled off her perspiration-sodden outer and inner garments standing where she was. Then, leaving them where they fell, she kicked off her shoes and walked nude and bare foot into the bathroom and turned on the cold-water faucet in the shower stall.

The water standing in the pipes came out lukewarm. While she waited for it to cool, she fitted her shower cap to her head, then stood studying her body in the full-length mirror on the door.

She didn't suppose that, as seen through the eyes of an amorous male, her body would be as attractive and desirable as that of her teenage neighbor. Still, the texture of her skin was good. She had nice ankles, well-shaped legs, a not unpleasing and adequate behind. Her pubic area was clearly and crisply outlined. She had the correct number of areolae and nipples and orifices. And until the muscles supporting her breasts began to sag and flab set in, one young woman was much like another. They all had the same basic organs and desires. And in spite of what her former fiancé had said, she knew she was capable of loving and of being loved. In fact, when the right man came along, he might be quite pleasantly surprised.

She wanted a lot more out of life than any number of degrees. They, and her job with the Board of Education, merely represented security and a certain social standing she'd never known as a girl.

No, thank you. She might still be virgin at twenty-seven but she had no intention of spending her life as an unmarried schoolteacher. Please God, when she found the right man, a man willing to play by the established rules, she would be very happy to put her fair white body to all of the various uses for which nature had intended it.

Since she'd broken up with Jim, she'd even been hopeful that she might have met such a man. That had been the night that old Mr. LaTour had introduced her to a tall, broad-shouldered man, obviously of Nordic extraction, when they'd chanced to meet on the stairs.

"Mary," the old man had said, "I'd like you to meet Lieutenant of Detectives, Ejler Hanson. Ejler, meet my favorite neighbor, Miss Daly, one of our prettier high-school teachers."

That had been all there was to it. She'd read in one of the numerous reports concerning the sexual behavior of women that they were never biologically stimulated by erotic memories or external stimuli. But that hadn't held true in the case of Lieutenant Hanson. True, she had no erotic memories. All that the man had done was shake hands with her. But even now, two months later, Lieutenant Hanson's remembered broad shoulders and tapered torso, the memory of the big hand dwarfing hers and the sound of his voice as he'd smiled, "I'm pleased to meet you, Miss Daly. Any friend of Frenchy's is a friend of mine," still sufficed to turn her knees to jelly whenever she thought of the incident.

Brief as the encounter had been, he'd seemed to be equally impressed. There'd been that almost immediate something between them. Hoping he had felt the same as she did, for two weeks after their meeting she'd hurried home from school like a high-school girl with her first crush, then sat alone all evening hoping the phone would ring, with Lieutenant Ejler Hanson on the other end, asking for a date.

She left the mirror and stepped into the shower stall. But no. She couldn't be that lucky. As far as he was concerned she was just another dame. They'd just been a man and a woman who chanced to meet on a stairs.

Mary was suddenly furious with Hanson. The least the big, good-looking, blonde Swedish son of a bitch could have done was drop a dime in a phone. It could be they both would have been surprised at what the investment might have earned him.

CHAPTER 3

From the silence of sorrowful hours
The desolate mourners go,
Lovingly laden with flowers,
Alike for the friend and the foe:—
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the Judgment Day:—
Under the roses, the Blue;
Under the lilies, the Gray. . . .

FRANCIS MILES FINCH

"The Blue and The Gray"

A dapper man of medium height, with a deeply lined face weathered by the sun and wind of more carnival and circus midways than he could remember, Frenchy LaTour sat in front of one of the open casement windows in his son's widow's expensively furnished apartment, twisting one spike of his now almost completely white waxed mustache as he viewed the flow of traffic on the two-block-distant Outer Drive with disapproving eyes.

It just didn't seem right.

Instead of there being a steady stream of cars pouring out of the city, stinking up a beautiful last-of-May morning with the fumes from their stinking exhausts, on their way to become crumpled statistics in the annual report compiled by the National Safety Council, their drivers and their families should be vying for places along Michigan Boulevard from which to watch the annual Memorial Day parade.

If this were fifty years before, they would. There'd been a time when everyone in Chicago—well almost everyone—had celebrated Decoration Day, as they called it then, with almost as much enthusiasm as they had the Fourth of July. He knew that when he'd been a boy the holiday had always been one of the biggest days in his year. It was one of his nicest and most pleasant memories.

First, he and his family had watched the parade, then

there'd been the ceremonies and the decorating of the graves and the picnic in Elmwood Cemetery, with all of the La-Tours and the in-laws present and accounted for. He'd always enjoyed the picnic. But the incident he remembered best of all was the year that his grandfather had been elected Commander of the local post of the G.A.R. That had been the year that the old man, wearing his double-breasted dark blue uniform and black slouch hat with the gold cord, a big silver sword dangling from a white patent-leather sword belt, had ridden a white horse at the head of the parade, with everyone cheering himself hoarse and taking off his hat whenever the flag went by.

Now if you took off your hat when the flag was trooped, it made you a square or a geek. Piss on such a people. He was glad he was old as he was. He wished he were a year older. If he were sixty-five instead of sixty-four, he could apply for his maximum Social Security and would not have to move with May into some new apartment.

The old man was fiercely loyal to his out-of-town daughter-in-law. Not that May wasn't good to him. She was. Embarrassingly so. He couldn't put his hand into the pocket of a freshly pressed pair of pants without finding a ten or a twenty that May had put there, just for walk-around money. Because he might maybe want to buy a beer or put two bucks on a nag.

LaTour was mildly grim about it. But that didn't alter the fact that, every time he opened his mouth, he was afraid he might use some word or expression that would shock her, or, even more important, until May had insisted that he move in with her, at least until he could go back to work, he'd never taken so much as a deuce note from a broad, let alone let a dame support him.

Then, there was the other side of the picture. Lieutenant Colonel Jim LaTour had been one swell guy and a hell of a hotshot pilot. He was proud to have been his father. It was the one big thing he'd ever done in his life. LaTour finished the coffee in his cup and looked at the framed picture of his son. But Jim was dead. He had no use for a woman where he was, and the silver-framed picture of a jet pilot who had been shot down over Haiphong made a hell of a bed companion for an attractive and desirable young woman.

Jim wouldn't want it this way. He'd want May to marry

again, at least find herself a boy friend. Perhaps if he moved to a hotel, she would. He wished he knew some nice way he could discuss the subject with May. He wished he knew some woman who could talk to her. Any cooch dancer in any show he'd ever worked for could tell her that all men were similar at least in that one department, and that while shacking up with another man wouldn't bring back Jim or cure her grief, it would beat hell out of taking phenobarbital and crying herself to sleep four nights out of seven.

Unfortunately, his daughter-in-law had never traveled in carnny circles. She'd gone straight from lead girl in a Vassar daisy chain to being a high-priced copywriter for one of Chicago's major advertising firms.

Carrying his coffee cup with him, he walked out into the kitchen and opened the door of the refrigerator. As always, when she had to go out of town on business, May had left an ample supply of food. There were fruit juices and eggs and bacon and country sausage, even a carton of pancake batter—all you had to do was pour it on a griddle.

"Now you eat while I'm gone, Father," May had insisted before she left for the airport. "You promise me that you'll eat."

LaTour closed the door of the refrigerator and located the pint of whiskey he'd hidden in back of the stove and bought himself his first drink of the day.

Okay. He'd promised. So he'd eat. As soon as he got dressed he'd walk over to one of the ptomaine parlors on North Clark. That way, if it was only a Chinese counter-man, at least he'd have someone to chin with. Besides, when a man had eaten in small-town restaurants and carnival cooks' tents most of his life, he got so he missed the grease.

He bought himself another drink as he planned his day. Then, after he'd eaten, he'd walk down town and find a good spot from which to watch the parade. It probably wouldn't be as good as the ones he had seen as a boy, but it would be something to do.

According to the notice he'd read in the morning paper, the parade was to start promptly at 2:00 P.M. and travel down Michigan Avenue from South Water Street to Van Buren. It would consist, at least so it said in the paper, of 30,000 marchers, including representatives of the various

military services, veterans' groups, and other patriotic associations. It was to be sponsored by the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Association, was to be led by the president of the Sons of Union Veterans, and reviewed from a grandstand erected in front of the Art Institute by the mothers and fathers of soldiers who had been killed in wars.

"I should have told them," LaTour thought. "I could be sitting right there with all the brass."

He debated the idea, then rejected it. Who wanted to get chummy with generals? As far as he was concerned there'd only been one good one in the crowd. And the clem from Missouri had fired him.

He returned the bottle to its hiding place. Then, as he did every morning, hopefully, he cleared his throat and tapped an imaginary cane on an imaginary midway spieler's platform and built an imaginary tip.

"That's it. Step right in. Crowd right up to the platform, folks. Now I tell you what I'm going to do . . ."

Nothing had changed overnight. There'd been no miracle. His voice, at least for the purpose for which he'd used it all his life, was gone. All that remained was a husky whisper, and all the pill peddlers he'd seen had told him he was lucky to have that.

The experiment, however, had been therapeutic. When an old man closed his eyes and thought back, it was so easy for the familiar sounds and sights and smells to rush in and take possession of his consciousness.

LaTour would swear he could hear the lazy creaking of a revolving Ferris wheel, the asthmatic wheeze of a carrousel organ, the metallic clang of stake hammers, the bull bellow of the canvas boss, the excited voices of children; he could smell freshly made popcorn, hamburgers sizzling on a grid-dle, the cheap perfume and powdered flesh of a line of chorus girls grinding and gyrating behind him.

He tried again:

"Step a little closer, friends. Just a little closer. That's it, sir. Crowd right in where you can see. No. Don't hold him back, lady. This is a girl show, not a pit show. Your husband is perfectly safe. We only engage very proper young ladies from Radcliffe, Smith, and Bryn Mawr. All except the cute blonde on the end. The one fixing her garter. She's

from Berkeley and we have to watch her. That's it, men. Crowd right in and watch her. Now I tell you what I'm going to do . . ."

LaTour gave up a second time. He wouldn't ever work again. At least not in the only business he knew.

He walked into the small bathroom off his bedroom and recombbed his hair and made certain that both spikes of his waxed mustache were exactly the same length. His choice of wardrobe for the day was more of a problem. Because of the growing heat, he decided on the natural-color silk shantung suit that he'd bought in Hong Kong when he'd been on tour with the Royal American Shows. Then, after fitting a loud-banded straw sailor hat to his head, he picked up his slim Malacca cane and let himself out of the apartment.

The silence in the hall was almost funereal, and about as friendly. In the two years he had lived in the building, outside of nodding good morning and good night and admitting it was cold or hot, he'd only met and really talked to four of his fellow tenants, the three schoolteachers in 301 and the blonde teenage daughter of the radio Bible thumper who lived in the apartment next to theirs. God knew he'd tried to be friendly. But he'd never met a crowd of more reserved or less talkative puddle jumpers in his life. He didn't even know what most of them did for a living.

He thought fat Mr. Rogers was a literary agent. He knew that the couple in the apartment next to May's were professional musicians and folk singers, but then only from snatches of conversation he'd heard when their windows were open and because they practiced at least four hours every day.

Someone, probably Mary Daly, had told him that Mr. and Mrs. Gilroy operated a dress shop and that the Garcias were formerly wealthy Cubans who'd had to leave most of their money behind them. Another one of the teachers, Ann he thought it had been, had informed him that Mr. Adamowski, the male of the couple in the apartment below Terry Jones, was a lawyer and that he and his pretty brunette wife were active in liberal and civil-rights circles.

The only other tenant he knew anything about was Mrs. Lamar Mason. And all he knew about her was that she lived in the most expensive apartment in the building, sel-

dom talked to any of the other tenants, and that whenever she went out, as she did infrequently, instead of using one of the two late-model Cadillacs gathering dust in the parking area, she called a firm specializing in chauffeur-driven limousines.

LaTour walked down the spiral stairs gripping the iron rail with one hand. It was odd, though. He would swear he'd seen Mrs. Mason before and that their acquaintance had been more than casual. She was, perhaps, give or take a few years, ten years younger than he was, but she still had a nice figure and not even the half veils she habitually wore when she was dressed for the street could hide the fact she was still a good-looking dish and in her day had undoubtedly been a beauty.

The hot morning sun outside the building felt good on his aging body. There'd been a time, LaTour reflected rather grimly, when he'd bitched about the heat with the best of them. But the older a man got, the less often he complained of being too warm, probably because the juices that generated internal heat in one form or another had dried up or become sluggish from disuse. He stood for a few moments enjoying just being alive, then started west, swinging his stick jauntily, and had to stop just short of the drive to keep from being run over as the blonde girl-child in 303 drove out of the parking space next to the building.

Terry braked her car and apologized. "Gee. I'm sorry, Mr. LaTour. I guess I should have sounded my horn."

"There are times when it helps," LaTour said.

Resting his palms on the warm metal of the door of the convertible, he studied the teenager's costume. Every so often in one of the towns he'd played, some preacher, or blue-nosed women's organization, usually looking for a little publicity, had tried to have the girl show closed. They'd claimed that the scanty costumes the girls wore constituted giving a lewd and lascivious performance that was detrimental to public morals. But if any of the broads in any of the shows he'd spied for had worn as little on stage as Miss Terry Jones was wearing in public, the fuzz would have thrown all of their cans in the pokey, then airmailed the key to J. Edgar.

Sensing the old man's unspoken disapproval, Terry said, "I'm going to the beach."

"Oh," LaTour said. "Have fun."

The girl started to drive on. Then with the candor of youth, she said, "Could I ask you a personal question, Mr. LaTour?"

"Why not?"

"You used to work with carnivals, didn't you?"

"That's right."

"What did you do?"

"I was a talker."

"What's a talker?"

LaTour explained. "Well, we're sometimes called 'barkers' or 'spielers.' And we're the guys stand on platforms around the midway and try to attract a crowd and get them to buy tickets for the girl show, or the walk-through, or the ten-in-one, or the muscle camp, or whatever attraction we happen to be ballying for at the time."

"Oh," the blonde girl said. "And that's why your voice is so husky? Because you've talked so much."

LaTour laughed. "No. I picked up this whiskey tenor two years ago in Quincy. You see, there was this hey rube on the lot of the show I was working for. And when some thistle chin got sore on account of he'd lost a few bills on a gaffed wheel and took a swing at me with a tent stake, I was so busy dancing with another puddle jumper I didn't have time to duck. And the first thing I knew the stake caught me across the talk box and I'd bought a ticket for permanent winter quarters."

It was obvious she didn't, but Terry said, "I see. Well, it's been nice talking to you. Can I drop you somewhere?"

"No, thank you," LaTour said. "It may take a little longer, but I much prefer to die of old age."

He watched the girl put her car into gear and turn right toward the on-ramp of the Outer Drive. She was a cute little trick if he'd ever whistled at one. And while it wasn't any of his business, in his opinion her father might be playing it smart if he gave Jesus a rest and paid more attention to his daughter. Dressed the way the girl was, one good sneeze and the pink noses of her titties would pop right out of her halter and she would have two more cheeks to rouge and another can of hair spray to buy.

He crossed the drive and walked on slowly through the morning heat. Not that he had anything against sex. In fact,

there had been a time when he had considered any day wasted if he hadn't banged at least one broad. Before he had met Jim's mother, and after she had died, he'd waltzed with girls from Bangor to San Berdoo and from Duluth to Laredo. During his numerous trips abroad, he had even done considerable experimentation in internal international relations. But one of the very first things the older heads had always taught a young carny was:

"If you're smart, you'll lay off the jailbait. Okay. So it's nice and dewy, and she's willing. It's also against the law to jump a female minor. And if, after you've pronged her, she or her parents should yell copper, one little piece of under-age quail can cost you plenty."

And they hadn't been talking about money.

LaTour tried to remember, but couldn't, when he'd last read or heard about some young punk, or an old one for that matter, being sent away to do time for having had sexual relations with a girl under the legal age of consent.

Seemingly it was all part of the current obsession for public exposure. Certainly his generation hadn't been any more moral than the current one. But at least when he'd been a young man, sex had been a participant and not a spectator sport. Even in a two-dollar parlor house, before the girl of your choice had peeled her chemise over her head and done her best to earn her money, she'd usually had enough innate pride or decency to close the door before she'd let you climb into the saddle.

Now, allegedly chaste, purportedly happily married women didn't seem to care what they showed or who admired it. They wore their skirts so short that everything but the promised land showed, and they went shopping in the supermarkets in less than their grandmothers had worn on their wedding night.

It didn't make sense. It didn't make any more sense than the current fad of B-girls and cocktail-lounge hostesses bobbling their bare boobies in a bar or dipping their nipples in your brew to build up their drink-token percentage. If, by the time he was old enough to walk into a bar and lay a bill on the wood, a man didn't know what a woman's breasts looked like, either he hadn't been trying or there was something radically wrong with him. Besides, unless male human nature had changed in the last few years, once

a man got a girl stripped down that far, any interest he might have in drinking was purely coincidental.

Terry said she was going to the beach. According to the morning paper, even allowing for the streams of people headed out of town, it was estimated a record crowd of over two million people would patronize the city beaches over the holiday weekend. By the law of averages, half of them would be male. Three fourths of the males would be young and looking for a dame. When a young male looked for a dame, he'd only one thing on his hot little mind.

LaTour walked on swinging his cane. So, while there was nothing he could do, or intended to do about it, dressed as she was dressed, it was his considered opinion that if Miss Terry Jones still had, and was desirous of retaining, her Biblical token of virginity, she would be very fortunate if she got through the day with nothing worse happening to her than smashing up her car and becoming a minor statistic in the National Safety Council's annual traffic report.

CHAPTER 4

15 girls: rates \$20 to \$100; billiard and snooker room; choice (fresh off the boat) whiskies, wines and beer. One of the best known and most deluxe houses of pleasure in the United States since the famed Everleigh Club. No other sporting house in Chicago can match it. As one enters the brilliantly lighted, three-story-high octagonal entrance hall and is ushered into the justly famed main parlor, its genuine Louis XV furnishings give the guest his first intimation of the quality of the entertainment to be found. On the first floor the discerning guest will find companionable conversation and good music. On the second and third floor he has only to make his pleasure known to the young lady of his choice. Lou Chandler's is THE PLEASURE HOUSE of Chicago, her girls of such beauty and attainments that no gentleman has ever gone away unsatisfied. Private rendezvous with Miss Chandler by appointment only . . .

*Privately distributed
four-color brochure,
issued May 1, 1929*

Lou Mason was good with figures, but the differentiation in world time bothered her. It had never been quite clear in her mind why when it was noon in Chicago, it should only be 10:00 A.M. in Los Angeles, and 7:00 in both Paris and Rome. Now, to complicate further her confusion, there was this silly business of Daylight Saving Time.

Snug in the nest formed by the various sections of the Sunday paper scattered over her gold lamé-upholstered Louis XV sofa, she ran the pink palm of one of her heavily ringed hands over her carefully coiffured hair as she read

the cablegram again. Postdated Rome the evening before, it read:

MADRE MIA . . . PLEASE TO DO NOTHING ABOUT FINDING
A NEW APARTMENT UNTIL YOU HEAR FROM US . . .
NINETTA AND I HAVE A SUGGESTION TO MAKE . . . WILL
PHONE YOU SUNDAY MAY 30 . . . LOVE . . . PIETRO.

It had been nice of Pietro to send the cablegram in answer to her letter telling that the building in which she lived was about to be torn down and she would have to move. If the message meant what she thought it did, she couldn't be happier. It would be nice to live with Pietro and his wife for a few months. She'd always wanted to see Rome. For that matter, she'd always wanted to see Pietro. She could wish he had said what time he'd phone.

Hearing footsteps in the hall, then the opening of the front door of the building, she turned and parted the heavy drapes. She might have known whom she would see. Whenever his prissy daughter-in-law was out of town and the three old-maid schoolteachers didn't invite him to eat with them, Frenchy LaTour always headed for one of the greasy spoons on North Clark Street like a hound dog baying a coon. The trouble with Frenchy, she decided, was he'd never had it so good. He'd eaten husks with the swine for so long that class made him feel uncomfortable.

Lou parted the drapes a fraction of an inch wider. The years, though, had treated Frenchy kindly. He was still a good-looking old devil. He still wore the flashy clothes that he affected with that certain air which had always reminded her of a banty rooster. Now they were both forty years older, the only external changes were that his hair was white and a husky whisper had replaced the golden voice that had sent a fourteen-year-old soft-coal miner's daughter into ecstasy.

"That's it. Step a little closer, folks. Crowd right in around me. Now I tell you what I'm going to do . . ."

Lou giggled. Not that Frenchy had known she was fourteen. That very first night, before he'd even tried to date her, he'd wanted to know, "How old are you, beautiful?"

"Eighteen. Going on nineteen," she'd told him.

And because she looked older than she was, and had been

very well developed, probably because she had been going out with boys since she was twelve, Frenchy had believed her.

And, as Lou remembered fondly even after so many years, the week that had followed had been *one* of the most, if not *the* most, beautiful week in her life. It had been such a vivid contrast to her normal, drab existence. In those days in Bloody Herrin, as they'd called it then, when the miners weren't fighting the scabs who'd come in to take their jobs, or the mine owners hadn't been hiring more goons to beat up the miners who dared to demand a living wage, about the only entertainment they could look forward to was the arrival of some tent evangelist or a carnival.

As Lou remembered, she liked the preaching best of all. She liked to hear about Jesus and God and Mary. It had been nice to know she was loved, that someone cared what happened to her.

There'd only been one trouble with the tent revival meetings. The local boys had gotten so excited about going forward to give their hearts to Jesus and singing hymns about the cleft in the rock of ages that, on your way home from the meeting, whatever boy you were with could hardly wait to get you in the back seat of his car and start screwing.

And there'd been none of this "I'll go so far, but no farther." In those days in the soft-coal country when no one had any money, a girl let the boy she was with do whatever he wanted to do. And once he had gotten her skirt up and her pants off, if she wanted him to take her out again, she'd damn well better screw back.

Lou continued to study the old man standing on the walk. But with Frenchy it had been different. He'd given her passes to every show and ride on the carnival lot. Then, after the midway had closed for the night, he'd borrowed a car and taken her to a roadhouse where there was a band. And he'd bought her a two-inch-thick steak and a half-dozen drinks and they had danced for hours before they'd gone to his room in one of the local hotels and made love.

All of the nights of the week they'd spent together had been equally as exciting, but she would always remember one night in particular. After Frenchy had turned his last tip, because he had known it would please her to show her how it was done, he'd bucked half of the wheels of fortune

and games of chance on the midway. And because he knew all the gimmicks, and his fellow carnival men had been good-natured about it, he'd won two Indian blankets, four kewpie dolls, a child's red wagon with yellow wheels, two big smoked hams, a real Irish linen tablecloth, and enough assorted groceries to feed a family for a month. And he had insisted on giving all of them to her.

Then, hours later, with both of them pleasantly tired and content from making love so many times she'd lost count, with the rising sun just beginning to gild the ugly tailings of the mines and the bullfrogs in the slough and the cicadas gone silent, he'd walked her home through the dew-fresh morning, towing her loot behind them in the little red wagon, just laughing and talking and playing the fool and him telling her about all the places he'd been.

And after they'd kissed at the gate and Frenchy had patted her one last time, she'd tiptoed into the company-owned shack in which she and her family lived, hoping that no one would hear her and thinking how happy her mother would be with the linen tablecloth and the groceries and what fun her brothers would have with the red wagon.

But her father was awake and standing in his underwear in front of the wooden sink in the kitchen, pumping himself a glass of water. And as she set the hams and one of the baskets of groceries on the table, he asked her:

"Where did you get that crap?"

"I won it at the carnival," she told him. "That is, a man won it and gave it to me."

"The man out by the gate? The one who just felt your ass as he kissed you good night?"

"Yes," she admitted defiantly.

But instead of giving her the back of his hand or even calling her a bad name as he usually did when he even suspected she'd been with a boy, all that her father had done was drop the dipper back in the water pail. Then, grown man that he was, he'd sat at the kitchen table and put his face in his hands and cried.

Now Frenchy didn't even recognize her.

Lou wished she could talk to Frenchy. She owed him a lot. If it hadn't been for him she would probably still be in Herrin, the wife or widow of some miner. Or long since dead from overwork, excessive childbearing, or both. She

and Frenchy could have a ball just remembering. But recalling and identifying herself to him could open some old pies that might much better remain closed.

There was one other thing, however, that she wouldn't ever forget. That had been the scene at the end of the week when she had begged Frenchy to take her with him.

"I'd like to, Lou," Frenchy had told her. "We make out just fine together. But traveling with a carnival isn't any life for a kid like you. No. You'd better stay put. And one of these days you're going to meet some guy who will be able to give you a home and all the other things a girl like you should have."

Naturally, she'd figured it for a brush. But after his train had pulled out and she'd reached in her purse for her handkerchief, she'd found that Frenchy had tucked seven tens and one five-dollar bill into the mirror compartment. Three fourths of his week's pay. Not to pay for his fun. He'd had that. Because it was the sort of a man he was. Because from what little she'd told him, he'd known she could use the money.

Lou heard the door open again and parted the drape a second time. This time it was Mr. Rogers. According to a full-page ad she'd read in a magazine for writers, Mr. Rogers was a literary agent and consultant. For a fee he would read a short story or a book and either try to sell it or make suggestions on how to make it salable. Or if he thought what you sent him was really good, but could be made better, for a larger fee he would work with a writer and give him or her the benefit of his own professional experience.

If she ever wrote a book about her own life, Lou decided, she would begin it with the week she'd spent with Frenchy and end the first chapter by asking if anyone could guess why the former Lou Chandler, now the very proper Mrs. Lamar Mason, had happened to rent an apartment in this particular building.

Then she would begin the second chapter by telling how she'd gotten into the rackets. She still didn't know why she had done what she had with the money Frenchy had given her. The only logical explanation she'd ever been able to give herself was that, having known a taste of what life could be like, she just couldn't go back to the poverty and uncertainty and the soft-coal dust that her parents had

known all their lives. So, without even going home for what few clothes she had, five minutes after Frenchy had left, she'd spent part of the money he'd given her for a one-way ticket on the next train to Chicago.

She continued to study the stocky literary agent. Then, if she should let Mr. Rogers help her with her book, in the second chapter she could split his fat guts, she could roll him and her readers on the floor, with a few droll tales and recollections about the bare-assed adventures of a fourteen-year-old soft-coal miner's daughter in Burnham. And in the Stockade and the old Maple Leaf Inn. And in the two-dollar, thirty-girl house on 18th and Dearborn.

Lou realized the cigarette she was smoking was burning her fingers and snuffed it in the sterling-silver and onyx ash-tray on the genuine antique Louis XV coffee table in front of the gold-lamé sofa. Oh, that should be a good chapter. That one should be a lulu. Then, for a touch of local color, to get the feel of the times into the book, she could relate any number of instances she'd witnessed. For instance, the Samuel J. (Nails) Morton caper.

There had been, Lou reflected as she resumed her study of Mr. Rogers, one good thing to say about that period in Chicago's history. There'd been very little racial or religious prejudice in the rackets. Anyone with enough moxie could play. And while Nails had been Jewish, they hadn't come any tougher. Before he'd tied in with the O'Banion crowd, he'd been a first lieutenant in World War I, a genuine hero in the flesh, with a French *croix de guerre* to prove it.

Unfortunately, Nails had also been a lousy horseman. And instead of getting himself decently killed by shooting it out with the Gennas or the Torrio-Capone combine, Nails had the bad taste to go for an early-morning ride on the bridle path in Lincoln Park and allow a rented horse to first throw and then kick him to death.

She would never forget his funeral. It was one of the nicest she'd ever attended. Nails had been buried with full military and religious honors, with floral sprays and stand pieces all over the place. It had all been very touching and the boys should have left it there. But no. Riding as high as they had been in those days, they'd had to go a step farther.

A few days after the funeral, Mr. O'Banion and Little Hymie, and some lesser members of the North Side crowd,

had constituted themselves a court and jury and had found the horse that had killed Nails guilty of murder and had not only sentenced it to death, but had also appointed a firing squad.

It had all happened so long ago, Lou couldn't remember all of their names, but Bugs Moran and Handsome Dan McCarthy and Maxie Eisen and Two-Gun Louie Alterie, along with Grecko and Riley, came to mind.

She hadn't been at the trial. She'd gotten that from one of the boys with a hundred dollars to spend. But early on the morning following the trial, she, being a minor Near North Side bigshot, what with having her own house by then, and three of her girls had been appointed as official, disinterested, witnesses to accompany the firing squad and make certain that the mandate of the court was carried out.

There'd still been dew on the grass when two of the boys who had been sent to get it had led the condemned animal to the exact spot where Nail's body had been found. Then each of the gunmen, in turn, had soberly stepped up and fired one shot into the horse's head.

When it was over the experience had left them all a little queasy and depressed. So when one of the boys had suggested they pick up a few cases of Scotch and a couple of ham-pers of sandwiches and pile into a couple of cars and drive up to the gang's lodge on Eagle River, it had seemed like a wonderful idea.

But even after they'd reached the lodge it had been more like a funeral than a picnic. The men had sat around with long faces, barely talking, cleaning and recleaning their guns while she and the other three girls had listened to phonograph records and had danced with each other to "Poor Butterfly" and "Dardanella" and "Japanese Sandman." It was one of the few times in her life she'd ever gotten really drunk. Even so it had been one of the longest and hottest and dullest afternoons she'd ever known. Almost as long and hot and dull as a Sunday afternoon in Herrin, Illinois.

Then, shortly before dark, the spring in the hand-wound phonograph had broken and, for want of anything better to do, in the hope it might liven things up a bit, she and the other girls had peeled down to their working clothes and had gone swimming in the river.

That had livened things up considerably, because by the

time the equally as nude and intoxicated members of the firing squad had caught up with them, right there on the grass under the trees, she and the other girls had been forced to do a lot of free alfresco consoling. And once they'd started, taking them as they came, one of them right after another, she'd never been more thoroughly or so enthusiastically laid. Nor had she ever known a group of men more in need of being consoled.

After all, it was the first time that any of them had ever killed a horse.

CHAPTER 5

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,
“Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, ‘On this wise ye shall bless the Children of Israel; ye shall say unto them:
“ ‘The Lord bless thee, and keep thee;
“ ‘The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee;
“ ‘The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.’ ”

NUMBERS VI:22-26

There were no special stars in the sky the night Leo Rogers was born. No angels hovered over Chicago blowing on golden trumpets. No wise men in the city council took cognizance of his coming. None of the neighbors brought his parents any presents or offered to pay the hospital bill. The only semiofficial notice taken of his arrival was the standard birth form filled out by the nurse and signed by the M.D. in attendance. As one of his fellow literary agents was fond of pointing out, Leo wasn't Jesus H. Almighty Christ. He only thought he was.

The last of four sons born to an average, lower-income, hardworking, middle-aged couple, Leo was a boy of whom nothing much was expected, and for a number of years he lived up to his parent's expectations. He played the usual games and had the usual diseases, both somewhat complicated by a tendency to overweight.

The first big changes in his life foreshadowing events to be was when he was bar mitzvahed at thirteen, kissed his first girl, graduated from grammar school, and Mr. Rumpelmeyer, who owned the delicatessen on the corner, paid him five dollars to help with his annual inventory.

Deciding he liked both girls and money, in that order,

even with a depression going on, Leo promptly applied for and obtained a work permit and got a summer job as a package hiker for a Loop department store. The hours were long, the work was hard, but the money he earned and saved enabled Leo to enroll in high school wearing his first suit of clothes with two pairs of long pants and with enough money left over to pay for his own carfare and lunches and buy an occasional banana split or tutti frutti sundae for certain of the more susceptible of his lipstick-wearing classmates.

Academically speaking, he wasn't any smarter in high school than he had been in elementary, but he managed to make passing grades even with the complications of managing the football and the baseball teams, an after-school job as an order runner for a mail-order house, and a full-time summer job in the warehouse of the department store where he had obtained his first employment.

However, after completing high school, instead of following the family tradition of going to work, impelled by the belief there had to be some easier way to make enough money to buy good clothes and the more intimate favors of the opposite sex other than working for it with his hands, he enrolled in Northwestern University, majoring in journalism, with every intention of becoming a reporter, or perhaps getting a cushy desk job with one of the news wire services.

For the next two years he studied hard and made good grades, financing his education by working as a night bellman.

Fortunately as it turned out, in 1950 his proposed career as a journalist was interrupted by the Korean police action, and after he'd held up his hand and had been read the more punitive passages of the Articles of War as applied to one Leo Rogers, he'd spent an undistinguished three-year hitch in the Army.

As things materialized, he wasn't sent into combat. He didn't win any medals. He did see hundreds of youths his own age maimed and killed in defense of a few thousand acres of real estate on which no self-respecting real-estate developer would have built a brick latrine.

Being a thoughtful youth of above-average intelligence, he found that, while his brief military career didn't advance his social or financial status, it did imbue him with an in-

satiable curiosity about the real meaning and purpose of life. So much so that on leaving the service, instead of returning to college and his parent's modest home on the west side of Chicago, he used his separation pay to rent a small furnished apartment in the Bohemian atmosphere of the Near North Side and attempted to put what he felt onto paper.

In the two years he tried to write, he sold two short stories and a much labored-over war novel that hadn't sold out its modest advance against possible royalties, the total monies received less than enough to pay his rent and feed him, let alone enable him to enjoy the feminine companionship he so much enjoyed.

During the two years, he did learn he had one very valuable asset. He might not be able to create salable material of his own, but he did have the happy faculty of being able to see the flaws in the efforts of other beginners. Much more important, he knew what to do about them.

To that end, with almost the last of his money, he inserted a small advertisement in a magazine published for would-be and beginning writers, offering for a small fee to read and make suggestions about any manuscript sent him. Or, if he felt the material was salable, to try to sell it on a commission basis to the market for which it was best suited.

He hadn't expected much from the ad but his new endeavor was a success from the start. Seemingly half of the people in the country, male and female, were either convinced they could write and had something to say, or felt that their life stories were certain to be awe-inspiring to the general reading public.

For the next five years Leo read himself almost blind, also into bloated solvency. But the big jump in his financial and agency status occurred when the changes and additions and deletions he had suggested in two book-length manuscripts resulted in the sale of two very controversial novels, one of them a runaway best seller. His commission on both books, plus his collaboration arrangement, plus the additional commission on the sale of the movie rights of the best seller earned him a small fortune. At least sufficiently large to open an office in the Loop, hire two college graduates to do most of his reading, and move into a bachelor apartment not far from the lake, remodeled from the bou-

doir and bath and sitting room of the onetime overamorous wife of a onetime early-day multimillionaire hog butcher.

Now that the building was being demolished and he was faced with moving again, there were only two minuscule interrogation marks in his literary ointment.

One, being a Jew, and, despite the tens of thousands of Stars of David standing between the crosses on the battlefields of every major engagement in which his country's armed forces had fought, some people still alleging that all Jews were cowards, Leo had a mild curiosity about how he, personally, would have reacted if he had been sent into combat during his tour in the Army. It was a small but annoying matter.

The other was the fact that, while his professional know-how and suggestions had helped two of his clients to write widely acclaimed books, he himself had never written anything that had gained critical recognition. In an attempt to remedy the matter, in what time he could spare from his editing and sales commitments, he wrote constantly, trying to make his earlier dream come true. The story was there. All he had to do was find it.

The heavy-set agent sighed. Then there was one other not so minor consideration. While the pen might be mightier than the sword, it was his considered opinion that the written word would never replace girls and, at a lusty thirty-five years of age, his personal love life was in something of a rut.

He still liked girls. He liked them very much. He liked to do everything it was possible to do with a girl. But outside of his remembered youthful rendezvous purchased with the price of a banana split or a tutti frutti sundae, a brief affair with an English major at Northwestern, the pleasant six months he'd spent with the Moose in Seoul, whom he had inherited from a fellow G.I. being rotated, and his uninspired biweekly contacts with the ten- and twenty-dollar play-for-pay girls he picked up in the neighborhood bars, his love life, to date, wouldn't make the back page of *Playboy*.

His new apartment, Rogers decided, had to fulfill two requirements: it had to be close enough to the Loop for him to walk to his office when he was in the mood; it had to be in some building where he could meet attractive young

women his own age, or younger, in his own hard-won social stratum, and matrimonially inclined.

He took his wallet from the left hip pocket of his fawn-colored Bermuda walking shorts and extracted the apartment-for-rent advertisements he'd cut from the morning paper. Several of them sounded interesting. One stressed that the building was only five minutes from the Loop, on one of the city's most exclusive corners, featuring big-city convenience but away from the clatter and clutter. Another announced that among the services it offered were a doorman, a receiving center, maid service, window cleaning, and a rooftop swimming pool and sundeck.

He wasn't particularly interested in having a doorman or a receiving center, but the rooftop pool and sundeck sounded like just about what he had in mind. There wasn't a better place to meet a girl than in a pool or on a sundeck. That way, if a man was interested, he didn't have to paw a lot of nonessentials aside to see what he was getting. Then, too, at the rental quoted, any girl who could afford to live in such a building should be good at whatever she did.

Rather amused by the scrutiny he'd been under, he returned the clippings to his wallet and walked past the front of the building to the drive leading back to the parking area. Mrs. Mason was sure hell on keeping track of the movements of her fellow tenants. Just let a footstep fall in the hall and there she was at her drapes. If one added up the time she spent peering out from between her parted drapes she had to know more about the tenants in the building than the Internal Revenue Service.

As he walked back down the drive toward his car, Rogers wondered, as he had a number of times, what the late Lamar Mason had done for a living. He also wondered, amused, how the very proper Mrs. Mason would react if she knew, or at least so one of the maintenance men had told him, that the plush apartment in which she was living had been remodeled from the main parlor and working boudoir of the owner when, back during the Prohibition era, the former brownstone mansion had been operated for some years as one of the highest-priced and most successful fancy houses in Chicago.

Mrs. Mason, Rogers decided, would probably swallow

her solid-gold lorgnette. He unlocked his car and rolled down the window and lit and puffed on a cigar while he waited for the interior to cool.

He would give the old dame credit for one thing. Whatever the late Lamar had done or how much money he'd left her, he'd undoubtedly gotten full value for any monies expended. The woman had to be in her middle fifties, but except for the black-haired high-school teacher in 301 and the blonde teenager who lived next door, she still had a better figure than any woman in the building. And although it was always partially hidden by the half veils she affected, what you could see of her face was as beautiful as her figure. There wasn't a line or a wrinkle on it. Undoubtedly, Rogers reflected, because the old girl had always lived the good life, because from the day she'd been born she'd never had to worry about a thing or be concerned with the ugliness and realities of life.

He stepped closer to his car as the Garcias drove in and parked in the space next to the one in which his car was standing.

"*Buenos días, señor,*" the male of the pair said pleasantly. "It is a little warm for this time of year, no?"

"That's for sure," Rogers agreed with him. "But then it is almost always warm in Chicago by Memorial Day."

"*¿Perdoneme?*" Garcia puzzled as he walked around his car to open the door for his wife.

"Memorial Day," Rogers repeated. He started to amplify the statement, then wondered how you explained a day commemorating the dead in a one-hundred-year-old civil war to a pair of Cuban refugees who'd recently been involved in one of their own. "One of our national holidays," he added rather lamely.

"*Sí,*" Mrs. Garcia beamed. "*Muy buenas, señor.*"

Rogers returned her smile but felt slightly frustrated as he always did when he tried to be friendly with the Garcias. He watched them walk up the drive, then felt his face color as the man and woman turned and nodded in his direction, and laughed in good-natured amusement before disappearing around the corner of the building. He felt suddenly like a girl who'd realized that the hem of her new-length skirt had climbed to a point where only the crotch

strap of her panties was keeping the best of her goodies from showing.

He couldn't look that funny in walking shorts. Or could he? He'd been dubious about the outfit when he'd bought it. And if he looked as ludicrous as he seemed to look to a pair of Cuban refugees, the rental agent of a tony apartment building would probably split his guts.

The hell with looking for an apartment. He still had almost a month before he had to move. He might as well spend the day as he usually spent his free Sundays, having dinner with his folks. His mother was always hurt when he missed his weekly visit.

But if he was going to go home, he knew he had to change. If he didn't, after taking one look at him in the abbreviated Boy Scout outfit he was wearing, his brick-laying and truck-driving three older brothers and their blowsy wives, and his fourteen nieces and nephews, and probably his father would spend the entire afternoon making earthy wisecracks in Yiddish about why, if he was such a bigshot, he couldn't afford to buy a pair of full-length pants. And his mother would seize on the instance to reiterate her constant query as to when he was going to stop fooling around with hot pantzed little *goyim* and marry some nice Jewish girl and settle down and give her some more grandchildren.

He wouldn't go anywhere, Rogers decided. He'd do what he really wanted to do. He would stay home and write. He rolled up the windows of his car and locked it. Then, after giving the Garcias sufficient time to get into their apartment, he walked back the way he'd come and climbed the spiral stairs. The towering entrance hall was filled now with the muted plunking of two guitars and two not so muted voices raised in nasal harmony as the Staffords rehearsed one of their numbers.

He would be glad to get out of the building and into a new one with a self-service elevator, an ultramodern building. One with no folk singers or nosey old ladies, or garrulous old carnival men, or smart-aleck refugees, or cheap publicity-seeking lawyers paying lip-service to civil rights.

Rogers added the teenager in 303 to the black list he was compiling. And no snot of a blonde *shiksa* who, when she

wasn't playing her hi-fi so loud it practically shook the building, seemed to spend most of her time mincing up the stairs, undulating her cute little heinie in the male tenants' faces.

At some period during its existence as an apartment house, the building had been equipped with individual air-conditioning units. Rogers' unit hadn't worked since he'd been given notice to vacate. He opened all of the windows on the lake side of his apartment and he wished he hadn't as the plunking of their guitars and the Staffords' doleful voices, singing one of their own compositions set to the music of "My Darling Clementine," painfully audible now, floated down from the open windows of their third-floor apartment.

In a dingy cabin, in Missouri,
Growing cotton for their grits,
Dwelt a farmer and a charmer,
His lovely daughter, Itty Bits.

Tan she was, and very buxom,
Her one tooth just like a pearl,
And that hoss man, the old boss man,
Wanted her to be his girl.

Lisped the charmer of the farmer,
Thank you kindly, sir, but I,
As you may gather, would much rather
Lay me down and purely die.

"Lay me down and purely die"?

Rogers pondered the lyrics as he slipped out of his ripple-soled sports shoes, then took off his half hose and matching sports shirt and the offending walking shorts, and tossed them on top of a pile of manuscripts stacked on a chair.

So help him, he thought as he padded barefooted out into the kitchen to get a bottle of beer, he didn't see how he'd stood it for as long as he had. Just living in the same building with such an assortment of kooks could get a man into trouble.

CHAPTER 6

Crime in the United States increased 8% according to the figures collected by the F.B.I. Although not all crimes are reported, the total of 2,048,370 crimes is considered a dependable number, including murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny and automobile theft.

Crimes increased in all cities, from 5% in cities of 100,000 to 250,000 to 11% in cities of 500,000 to 1,000,000. In the last five years crime has increased four times faster than the population. Murders and forcible rape proved most numerous during the warm summer months. Firearms were used in more than half and cutting instruments in one out of four.

Crimes by young people continue to advance. Of the arrests for auto theft and forcible rape, 62% involved youngsters under 18. . . .

CRIME SUMMARY
May 10, 1965

“What do you think, Lieutenant?” Ginnis asked.

Lieutenant Hanson looked over one shoulder of his well-tailored suit coat. “About what?”

The big detective in the back seat of the squad car was patient with him. “About what my kid said last Friday when he came home from school.”

“What did he say?”

“He said that famous poet, you know, the one who wrote the poem about that Indian named Hiawatha—”

“Longfellow?”

“That’s the one. Anyway, like I was telling the other boys, last Friday night while we are having supper my kids said his English teacher told the class that Mr. Longfellow was writing about this section of the county, and that the real

name for Lake Michigan is Shining Big-Sea-Water, or, in Indian, Gitche Gumee."

Hanson wasn't overly impressed. "Could be. But back in the part of Minnesota that I came from, the local chamber of commerce always claimed that was Hiawatha country."

Brotz, driving the car, with less than two months to go for his pension, wasn't taking any chances with his retirement plans. As the light at the half-block-distant intersection turned red, he slowed the big black car to a crawl. "Oh, I don't know. Why would anyone want to call a lake Gitche Gumee? It sounds kinda goofy to me. More like tickling a baby. Or maybe goosing a girl."

"Watch it, Herman," Meyers reproved him. "Such language from a grandfather. You're being a dirty old man again."

Brotz looked carefully left, then right, to make certain no Sunday driver was close enough to try to run the amber light, then crossed the intersection on the green. "Oh, I don't know. Like the wife said the other night. She said I was a dirty young man. Why should she expect me to change?"

The two detectives in the back seat of the car laughed. Hanson smiled, thinly. Brotz was a good man. He was sorry he was going to lose him. He did hope, whoever his replacement was, the new man wouldn't preface almost everything he said with, "Oh, I don't know." It was a small thing but there were days when it grated on him. Today was one of them, perhaps because of the heat and the fact they were working a double shift.

He rode looking out the open window at the lake. As with Brotz, he didn't know about the Gitche Gumee part, but, with the late-morning sun beating down on the lake the way it was and the green of the water reflecting the sun's rays, Shining Big-Sea-Water was a very appropriate name.

Gitche Gumee. Hanson rolled the name on his tongue. Once you said it two or three times, it didn't sound bad. Whether it was the original name for the lake was something else. He imagined the black-haired high-school teacher to whom Frenchy LaTour had introduced him would know.

One of these nights, when and if things quieted down a little, he must remember to get her telephone number from Frenchy. He'd liked Miss Daly. He'd liked her very much. She was not only vivacious and intelligent, everything she

had, and she had plenty, was packed in a very neat package. He could get that way just remembering how she'd looked the one time they'd met.

"Why so quiet, Ejler?" Meyers said.

"Just thinking," Hanson said.

When and if things ever quieted down a little.

Hanson removed his new straw hat and fanned himself with its brim. Not that he was complaining about being overworked. When a Swede farm kid from Saulk Prairie, Minnesota, with only a high-school education, could come to a town like Chicago and make lieutenant of detectives by the time he was thirty-six, he'd no reason for complaint.

He liked his job. He'd liked Chicago on sight. And their love affair still continued. Even now he'd lived in it for almost twenty years, just looking at its miles of lake shore and super highways, and its parks and its various business districts, and its acres of tall buildings, with newer and even taller buildings rising every day, never failed to impress him.

He used the lighter on the dashboard of the squad car to light a cigarette. As far as he was concerned, there were only three bad features about being a lieutenant of detectives, bucking for captain.

One was to have people from out of town, particularly visiting relatives from Saulk Prairie, persist in asking him how many submachine-gun fights he'd seen between the rival mobs, if the Cosa Nostra had ever threatened to get his job, how much he was able to graft on top of his salary, and which was the best two-dollar cathouse for a quick "Thank you, ma'am."

It could be that things had been that way in the old days. He'd heard that they were.

But during the fifteen years that he had been with the C.P.D., the only mob fights he'd ever seen had been between neighborhood punks, armed for the most part with zip guns, switchblades, and bicycle chains. He wouldn't know a *padrone* of the Cosa Nostra if he met one on the street. No one but a few hundred assorted drunks, male and female, claiming to be a relative or a girl friend of some alderman, had ever threatened to get his job. Some officers took; some didn't. Personally, he'd never been offered enough to make it worth his while.

The girl situation was equally ludicrous. As in every large

city, there were thousands of girls, most of them working out of bars or some telephone exchange, who hustled for a living. But he didn't know of any houses *per se*. As far as he knew, there hadn't been any for years. And with prices the way they were, any girl worth laying who was willing to spread her legs for a price would laugh if you offered her two dollars. And laugh, and laugh, and laugh.

Hanson admired the trim ankles, then the derrieres, of two smartly dressed women emerging from the doorway of a high rise. Another bad feature about his job, especially now that he was trying to get a law degree via the night-school route and still hold down a regular tour of duty, was that it didn't leave him much time for extracurricular activities, particularly time in which to meet and get to know eligible girls who might be interested in marriage.

The third and most important, and the one that bothered him the most, was the steadily rising crime rate. In his opinion a great deal of the blame for the increase in crime accrued to the judiciary; to the growing tendency of judges, at all levels, to protect and coddle the individual lawbreaker at the expense of the general public. Why bother to have a police force? Why bother to risk your ass, and frequently your life, to arrest and book a rapist or a murderer if some judge was going to throw the case out of court on a technicality, or so word a sentence that a convicted man would be eligible for parole and free to repeat the offense in a minimum number of months or years? And this growing trend was especially true as regarded juveniles.

It was Meyers who first spotted LaTour. "Hey. Look who's up ahead."

"What do you know?" Ginnis said. "The old carny."

"Let's roust him for kicks," Brotz suggested.

"Why not?" Hanson agreed. "If we report back in too soon, we'll only have to go out on another squeal that doesn't rightly belong to us. Just because some of the vice-squad or robbery-unit boys *had* to drive up or down the lake to celebrate Memorial Day."

Meyers shrugged. "We can be glad we're not in Traffic."

"Oh, I don't know," Brotz said.

LaTour waited for the traffic light to change from red to green, then stepped from the curb jauntily and promptly

stepped back again as a long black Cadillac, polished until it glistened, the gun rack affixed to the back of its front seat bristling with riot and shot guns and rifles, swung around the corner, effectively blocking the cross walk.

"All right. Hold it right there, LaTour," Lieutenant Hanson said coldly. "What are you doing out in all this heat? You aren't supposed to crawl out from under your stone until dark."

It was one of LaTour's favorite games, one of the few left him. Resting his palms on the warm metal of the front door of the squad car, he snarled back from one corner of his mouth. "Don't give me that crap, copper. There was this crip I had to crack, see? But if you guys think you can shake me down, you're nuts. I never pay off to the fuzz."

Then, as pleased as he was to see the four men, he couldn't play the game any longer and an almost pathetically grateful grin split his lined and weathered face. "Hi, Herman. Hi, Ejler. Hi, Max. Hi, Johnny. Gee, is it good to see you guys. You just coming back from a squeal or going out on one?"

"Coming back," Ginnis said. He sighed. "It seems a bare-assed, big-titted little junkie in one of those love nests up near the Drake got to feeling so sorry for herself she emptied a mail-order pistol into her married meal ticket, then got to feeling so sorry for him she tried to do a Dutch before either we or the ambulance could get there. Unfortunately, they'll both live."

"Oh, I don't know," Brotz said. "She must have been a pretty good-looking broad before she blew that second hole in her belly."

Hanson made a fist and mock punched the other man's jaw. "Where you headed, Frenchy?"

"For coffee and Danish," the old carnival man said. "Then I'm going to watch the parade. Hey. Did I ever tell you guys that my grandfather led it once? On a big white horse wearing a silver sword."

"You're kidding," Meyers said. "You have to be. Who ever heard of a white horse wearing a sword?"

LaTour continued to grin happily. This was going to be one of his good days. Meeting the boys was the nicest thing that had happened to him all week. He liked these men. He and they spoke the same language. Their acquaintance of

almost two years had begun shortly after May had persuaded him to move in with her. Because, as she'd put it, he needed her and he was all she had left of Jim.

There he'd been, minding his own business, just walking along the Gold Coast at two o'clock in the morning, when the brightest spotlight he'd ever seen had pinned him against the wall of a building and a male voice had called: "Hold it right there, old timer. This is the law."

Then while he'd held it right there, four huge men, clean-shaven, smelling of shaving lotion and good cigars, had swarmed out of a squad car and three of them had held guns on him while the fourth man had frisked him as deftly as a pratt feeler locating an apple knocker's wallet.

And after they'd found he was clean and had checked his identification, they'd talked and he'd told them why he was walking that time of morning on account of he couldn't sleep and all about May and Jim and the hey rube on the lot in Quincy and they had insisted on driving him back to the old brownstone apartment building.

Now when they chanced to meet, they frequently had coffee together or, if it happened to be a cold night and they were nearing the end of their tour, perhaps something a trifle stronger. He even had a standing invitation to visit them in their squad room, and twice, with the permission of their watch commander, he'd made part of their tour with them.

LaTour liked them all. But of the four men, he was the fondest of Ejler, possibly because the tall, blonde, blue-eyed lieutenant of detectives reminded him of Jim. Once, several months before, in the hope that Hanson and May might strike it off, he'd even invited him to the apartment for a few drinks.

Unfortunately, nothing had happened. There'd been no sparks. All they'd been was polite to each other. All they had made was small talk. In fact, Ejler had been much more impressed by Miss Daly when they'd happened to meet her on the stairs.

"Holy Toledo! Now there's my kind of a girl," Hanson had told him privately. "If I ever got my big Swedish hands on her, I'd keep her barefoot and pregnant. And you know something? I think she'd like that."

"Well, what do you think, fellows?" Hanson polled the other men in the car. "What's the verdict?"

"Guilty," Brotz said, sober-faced.

"He's guilty as hell," Ginnis nodded.

"I'll go along with that," Meyers agreed.

Hanson reached behind him and opened the rear door of the squad car. "Okay. You heard what the boys said, Carny. And my vote makes it unanimous. You have just been found guilty of attempting to walk into the side of a C.P.D. squad car with unmalicious and nonfelonious intent. So, if you don't want us to put out an all-points on you, or maybe even leave you standing out here in the heat, you'd better climb in and make that *five* cups of coffee and *five* Danish."

"Good," LaTour beamed as he got in beside Ginnis and Meyers. "I knew you guys were on the take. I knew it all the time." He leaned, blissfully, against the back of the seat. "And if there is one thing I've always liked better than shortchanging a rube, it's been bribing a gravy squad."

CHAPTER 7

In 1965 there were 4,054,000 live births registered, the smallest number for any year since 1955. It was the fifth successive annual decrease, the birth rate dropping to 21.2 per 1,000 population. Despite an increase (1.5%) in the number of females of childbearing age, 15 to 44 years old, their rate of childbearing was only 105.5 live births per 1,000 women as compared to 121.2 in 1957. . . .

U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE VITAL STATISTICS

The feud between the residents of the North Shore who owned property abutting on the lake and the would-be bathers and swimmers and teenage groups and gangs searching for slightly less crowded sections of sand on which to hold their beach parties and hootenannies had been going on for years. Federal law forbade building a fence down to the water line or out into the lake. Due to the strong winds blowing in off the lake, fencing in a section of beach wasn't practical. However, most of the residents fortunate enough to live in estates fronting on the lake claimed the sand in front of their homes as private property and posted signs informing the general public that theirs was a private beach and no trespassing was permitted.

Not that the signs did much good. On an average of half a dozen times every summer, residents were forced to inform trespassers the signs meant just what they said. In most instances, however reluctant, the individuals or groups moved on. Several times every summer, though, overstimulated by the cans of beer they'd packed in their picnic lunch, one or more groups refused to disperse and the local police had to be called.

There were even instances where, inspired by more than beer, young toughs and their equally tough and amoral girl

friends, gave residents a bad time. In those instances, when the police did arrive, they were forced to book them for simple assault, using profane language in public, using a blanket spread on the beach for a public exhibition of the biological fact that while they were still too young to vote, they were adult enough to try to add one or more hungry mouths to the rolls of the A.D.C.

Terry was feeling slightly guilty as she drove into Wilmette. She liked Miss Daly. She liked her the best of the three schoolteachers who shared the next apartment. Perhaps she shouldn't have told Miss Daly that she was going to Oak Street or Clarendon. In a way it had been a lie. She'd had no intention of going to either. Terry salved her conscience with the memory that she'd really said to Miss Daly:

"And if they're both too crowded, I may just find a quiet spot somewhere and soak up some sun."

To which Miss Daly had replied, "That's going to be hard to do this morning. I mean to find a quiet spot along the lake."

Terry giggled. And that showed how much her neighbor knew, with all her degrees. She and Paul had found a quiet spot the very first afternoon they'd looked. Of course, she hadn't told Miss Daly about Paul. Good heavens, no. She hadn't even told her father. And would their eyes bug out when they met him and she said, "Miss Daly, Father, I'd like you to meet Paul Szabados, my husband."

Paul was smart. It had been Paul who'd suggested they look for For Sale signs on the lawns of the houses directly on the lake. And in the third place they'd looked there hadn't even been a watchman or a caretaker. After parking Paul's car in the drive and knocking on the door and shouting a few times to be sure the house was unoccupied, all they'd had to do was walk back along a wet leaf-littered walk and down a flight of rotting wooden stairs and there was their private beach.

It couldn't be more private. There were no houses for half a block on either side, nothing but trees and a tangle of underbrush. A small wooded cliff extended into the lake on one side and a heavily wooded spit of land ran out on the other. Unless you'd visited it before, or saw it from the lake, you wouldn't know the beach was there.

As the traffic slowed, then stopped completely due to an

accident up ahead, Terry glanced at the dial of the watch her father had sent her for being a good girl while he was away. She didn't want to be late if she could help it. Paul didn't know it yet, but this was a big day for both of them. It wasn't every day that a girl could tell a boy he was going to be a father.

Terry thrilled at the thought of the new life growing in her body. Ever since she'd known for sure, she'd been ecstatically happy. Nothing this nice had ever happened to her before. While she waited for the flow of traffic to resume, she took from her oversized beach bag the medical book she'd brought along to show Paul and reread the paragraph dealing with the second month:

During the first half, the embryo is markedly flexed and the visceral arches and clefts are the most prominent features of the head region. The extremities are rudimentary. In the latter part of this month, the entire pregnancy is about the size of a pigeon's egg and fetus measures about 2.5 cm. or 1 inch in length. The amnion is filled with fluid and is in contact with the chorion. The placental site begins to differentiate and the umbilical cord and vessels to develop and the head is disproportionately large and the features can be distinguished.

The blonde girl realized the cars were moving again and the man in the station wagon behind her car was beeping his horn at her.

"All right, all right," she called back over her shoulder as she returned the book to her bag. "I'm in just as much of a hurry as you are, mister. Can I help it if some dumb bunny doesn't know how to drive or runs out of gas or something?"

She drove on in the stream of cars, smiling smugly. Her father would raise hell if he knew she was two months pregnant. The old Cowboy would really have something to preach about. He'd blister the paint off his pulpit. And if she were pregnant by just any old boy, he'd have a right to be furious with her.

But with Paul and her it was different. They were going to be married. All they had to do now was figure out where

and when. True, Paul was hoping for a football scholarship. But lots of young married men with a child or two went to college. Some colleges even had special housing for them. And if she could just talk her father into continuing her weekly allowance, at least until after the baby was born, they should get along just fine.

With traffic moving rapidly again and no buildings between the road and the water, the wind off the lake was ruining her hairdo. After all the time she'd spent on it, trying to look beautiful for Paul. Terry considered pulling over onto the shoulder of the road and raising the top of the car but decided it would be a waste of time. Loving her as he did, when she told Paul the good news, the first thing he would probably do would be to run his big fingers through it and ruin it again.

She drove through Wilmette into Kenilworth and on into Winnetka in a river of cars, thinking how wonderful everything was with her, how much more wonderful it was going to be and how the whole thing had begun.

There she'd been standing in front of her locker, between English 3 and Study Hall and Paul had stopped and smiled down at her.

"Hi, there, beautiful," he'd said. "I don't believe we've met. I've just transferred from Hanson Park and my name is Paul Szabados. What's yours?"

Just like that, without wasting any time.

"I'm Terry," she'd told him. "Terry Jones." Then, seeing he was a letter man and was wearing his sweater, she'd wanted to impress him, so she'd said, "You may have heard of my father. He's Cowboy Jones, the evangelist."

"No kidding," Paul had grinned. "Well, here I am, standing in the need of prayer."

Then both of them laughed until the rest of the kids thought they were crazy. After school he'd bought her a malt and asked her if he could drive her home. He'd been quite impressed when she'd told him she had her own car and had shown him her new 500XL.

Terry brushed her whipping hair out of her eyes. After that so many things had happened so fast that, whenever she tried to sort them out chronologically, they had a tendency to become confused. They'd gone to the movies and for drives. They'd danced and tried to take in a nightclub

but the doorman wouldn't let them in, even when she'd lied that she was eighteen. Several times after Paul had learned she lived alone while her father was out of town, he'd suggested that they spend an afternoon or evening in the apartment. But while he'd attended a number of parties there, she'd vetoed the idea of their being alone. Not because she didn't want to be alone with him. Because she'd been afraid Miss Daly or nosey old Mrs. Mason on the first floor might write a letter to her father telling him that she was keeping company with a boy, and her father would insist she come and live with him in Juarez.

When they'd wanted to be alone, they'd parked in either his or her car in one of the forest preserves or along the lake. But it hadn't been until they'd found their private beach two months ago that, because she'd wanted him to respect her, she'd allowed him to be intimate with her.

Terry thought back to the beginning of her baby. It had happened during the sudden and unseasonal warm spell during the last of March. They'd started out intending to take a drive along the lake, maybe as far as Kenosha before turning back, when Paul had hit upon his idea about scouting out some less crowded beach they could use when the weather really turned warm.

"Look, little honey," he'd said. "These people up here don't like us. They think just because they're rich they own the whole darn beach and lake and if you try to use a little of their sand they either shag you or phone for the cops. But if we could find a beach in front of some house that's for sale, a house no one is using, who's to know?"

As early in the year as it was, it had been comfortable in Paul's car with the windows open. But, thinking of her, in case it might be cold down by the lake, Paul had suggested they take the blanket he always kept in the back seat of his car when they'd walked down the rotting wooden steps to their private beach for the first time.

At first they'd just sat on the blanket, looking at the white caps on the lake, holding hands and kissing, and telling each other how wonderful it was going to be to have their own private beach when the weather got really warm. Then, because the wind off the lake was cold, they'd spread the blanket on the sand and had lain on half of it and used the other half to cover themselves. And with them lying so close

and kissing the way they were and feeling the way they did about each other, she supposed what followed had been inevitable.

Even then Paul had been a gentleman about it. He hadn't tried to hurry or force or pressure her. "May I? Please, Terry," he'd begged. "I love you so much."

And because she'd wanted him as badly as he'd wanted her, she'd told him, "Of course, darling."

Terry still thrilled at the memory. And when Paul had taken her, it had been as beautiful and as wonderful as she'd always known it could be if the girl was in love with the boy and he was in love with her. It hadn't been at all like it had been with any of the other boys whom she'd allowed to be intimate with her. It had been so natural, so right. They'd loved all the rest of the afternoon, one time after the other, each time more beautiful than the time before. They'd been so in love and in so much need of each other that it was night and the sky was filled with stars before they had finally rearranged their clothes and walked hand in hand back to Paul's car.

The afternoon would always be precious to her.

Terry wet her lips with her tongue as she compared it to the first time she'd had relations with a boy. She wasn't proud of the incident, but she supposed there had to be a first time for everything. That had been four years ago, when she'd just turned twelve and had begun to have periods. In Wewoka, Oklahoma, while her father had still been preaching in the big tent and she had been traveling with him.

Her father put on a good show, she reflected. At least the people to whom he preached always seemed to enjoy it. Of course he had a sure-fire commodity. He preached Jesus and Salvation. Salvation with a capital S. Then, too, depending on the section of the country in which he was holding his revival, he always proved that the Jews, or the niggers, or the Catholics couldn't *possibly* be God's children. All in all his sermons were quite interesting and inspiring and on several occasions, although she hadn't been quite certain what sin was, she had come forward with the other sinners to receive her father's blessing and be washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Driving with one hand, Terry felt in her beach bag for

her package of cigarettes. Her father had been particularly good that night, and damning the Catholics, and she'd gotten so hot and excited watching the squad of canvas boys dressed like United States Marines march down the center aisle to rescue the nun lying in the coffin on two sawhorses in front of the podium that she'd had to go outside and cool off. And somehow, she'd got to talking with a good-looking local boy, possibly two or three years older, and just as excited as she was.

Then the next thing she'd known, she'd never been quite certain how they'd gotten there, they were sitting on the grass under a clump of sumac bushes a few hundred feet from the tent, with the boy kissing and handling her and telling her how beautiful she was. Then he had begged her to let him prove how much he loved her. And by then, what with the kissing and the handling and being excited to start with, she'd thought, why not?

But after the boy had eased her back on the grass and had pulled her dress up over her breasts and had taken off her panties, it hadn't been at all what she'd expected making love to be.

There'd been no particular pain. But all of the time that the boy had been breathing hard in her face and whimpering for her to help him, a sharp stone or a twig had been digging into one of her buttocks and she'd suddenly been deathly afraid that someone connected with the revival would look into the bushes and see them. As far as she was concerned, all it had been was rather unpleasant and, at the end, very icky.

The boy, though, Terry thought wryly, had had a good time. Boys always did. And after he'd had his climactic, just as the folks in the tent were singing the last hymn, he'd kissed her on the mouth and patted her fanny and told her she was a hot little lay and not too bad for a minister's daughter, but she needed a lot of practice.

Then, leaving her where she was, with the stick or the stone still poking into her and everything she had showing, he'd put the by then limp little thing he'd been using on her back in his pants and had gone off whistling into the tent to earn the quarter her father always paid the local boys to gather up the hymnals and help load the folding chairs into the truck.

Later that night, so ashamed of herself she could die, and worried the boy might have gotten her pregnant, she'd tried to tell her father what had happened. But he'd been too busy counting the night's receipts and talking to his advance man about the publicity for the upcoming week's revival meeting in Oklahoma City to listen to her.

Nor had she been able to find anything in the Bible to ease her state of mind. She'd found whole pages of "begats" from Chronicles I through VIII. But nowhere in any of the listings did it say whether or not a twelve-year-old girl who had let a boy take her into the bushes could beget. She'd been worried sick for two weeks, but in the end nothing had come of the incident.

Nothing more, Terry thought, than had come of similar incidents in the four and a half years since when, because it was too much trouble to argue, or she rather liked a boy, or she happened to be in the mood, and because all of the other girls in her crowd, except the creeps, thought you were a square or queer for girls if you didn't put out once in a while, she'd allowed a half dozen other boys to be sexually intimate with her.

She pursed her lips primly. But never completely undressed or more than one time. And never when she hadn't taken her B.C. pills.

When she thought back, nothing, but *nothing*, had ever really happened to her until she'd met and fallen in love with Paul, until he had taught her how truly beautiful and sacred the physical relationship between a boy and a girl could be. And now with her carrying his baby, the proof of their love, a little thing as yet no larger than a pigeon's egg, she'd never been so happy.

Paul would be so pleased when she told him.

Only one thing about her relationship with Paul worried her. Every boy liked to think he was the first and she'd been a trifle apprehensive about what Paul would think when he found out she wasn't cherry.

Terry patted the beach bag on the seat beside her. But Paul hadn't seemed to notice. At least he hadn't said anything. And if he ever did bring up the subject, she had the answer. It said right in the medical book, with illustrations to prove it, that there were six types of hymens. And some women didn't have any. And even when they were exam-

ined by a qualified doctor only a very large vaginal orifice and carunculae myrtiformes, whatever carunculae myrtiformes were, would suggest the absence of virginity or point to the possibility that a girl had been sexually intimate with a number of men.

Terry was a little smug. And she'd never been intimate with even one man. Not that some of her girl friend's fathers hadn't tried. Nor would there ever be any more boys in her life. No one ever but Paul. Since she'd met Paul she hadn't let another boy touch her. She never would. As God was her judge she would be the best wife and mother of his children that any boy ever had.

In spite of the excessive amount of traffic, she made good time. It was five minutes of noon when, lost in her plans for the future, she realized her turnoff was less than a quarter of a mile away and she was in the wrong lane.

She edged over toward the right lane and tried, in vain, to wedge her way between two fast-moving cars. Finally, with the turnoff coming up fast, she was forced to flick on her right-turn indicator and cut in between the two cars, a new Buick and an older model Chevrolet, with a determined suddenness that forced the youthful driver of the Chevy to stand on his brakes and swerve his car off onto the shoulder of the road to keep from running into her.

"Goddamn woman driver!" he shouted.

Then she was in the clear and on the secondary road, where there was very little traffic. Minutes later she turned in through the open, rust-covered wrought iron gate and drove down the crumbling brick drive of the old unoccupied house on the lake and braked her car at the top of the stairs that led down the low bluff to the lake.

The number of weathered For Sale signs thrusting up from what the long winter had left of the weed-choked front lawn always made her a little sad. People had once lived here, people who probably had once been as happy as she knew she and Paul were going to be. Now all that was left were the weeds, the For Sale signs and a pile of stone.

Paul's car wasn't in the drive. That meant if she hurried she would have a few minutes to check her makeup and comb her hair before he arrived.

She kneeled on the seat and got the blanket from the

back of her car. Then, carrying it and her beach bag, she walked down the wooden stairs to the beach. Their beach was as beautiful and private as it always had been. Humming happily to herself, Terry spread the blanket on the dry sand and anchored the corners neatly with her bag, the thick medical book, her purse and the new transistor radio she'd bought Paul as a happy father-to-be present.

The blanket arranged to suit her, she put on fresh lipstick and combed her hair and added a trifle more eye shadow to make her large brown eyes look larger than they were. Then, satisfied she'd made herself as pretty as she could, she leaned back on her hands and stretched out her legs in the sun. She hoped Paul would like her new playsuit. She thought he would. The saleslady who'd sold it to her told her that all natural blondes looked well in pastel green.

Five minutes passed. Then ten. To kill time while she waited for Paul, Terry turned on the radio she'd bought him, tuned to a rather raucous recording of "No Place To Go" and sat snapping the fingers of one hand as she reread the last letter from her father.

The Cowboy didn't have to feel sorry for her. She was making out just fine. Little Terry could take care of herself. As he'd requested, she'd put the certified check he'd sent for the first and last month's rent on a new apartment into the bank. But until she'd talked to Paul and they'd made their plans, she didn't know what to do about looking for an apartment. Or, for that matter, what to do about the furniture in the present one. She could probably use some of it but it was certainly more furniture than she and Paul would need in the small apartment they would be able to afford, even assuming her father would be willing to continue her allowance until after the baby was born and they could get on their feet.

Problems. Problems. Problems. Terry was a trifle annoyed as she returned the letter to her purse. And now, just when she needed him the most, instead of being there waiting for her as he usually was, Paul was late.

The time they'd agreed upon over the phone had been 12:30 sharp. She was here. Where was he? When Paul didn't arrive by one o'clock she started to worry. Anything could have happened to him. He could have had a flat tire. He could have been in an accident.

She was relieved when she heard a car drive up the drive. Her relief was short-lived as four boys, none of them Paul, appeared at the head of the stairs and one of them exclaimed just what she and Paul had first voiced.

“Hey. What do you know? A private beach all our own.”

CHAPTER 8

Jean Nicolet is credited with being the first white man to navigate Lake Michigan. Sent west by Samuel de Champlain on a voyage of exploration, he threaded his way in a birch canoe from Georgian bay through the Straits of Mackinac and thus discovered Lake Michigan in the summer of 1634. . . .

It is about 321 mi. in length, averages about 70 mi. in width and has a maximum measured depth of 924 feet. . . .

The dangerous storms of the autumn, winter and early spring are usually westerly. Ice interferes with navigation in the northern part of the lake in winter; the average closing and opening dates for navigation in the Straits of Mackinac are Dec. 15 and April 12, respectively. . . .

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Terry wet her lips with the tip of her tongue as she regarded the four boys. This *would* happen. The one afternoon she wanted to be alone with Paul, four cruds would discover their beach.

She found and adjusted her prescription sunglasses so she could see them better. Being able to see them better didn't improve their appearance.

All of them wore ducktails. As far as she could tell all of them were barefoot and were wearing wrinkled slacks that hadn't been washed recently and T-shirts just as filthy. All but one, who seemed to be their leader. He was wearing a cheap blue yachting blazer over his bare torso and had what looked like a fifth of whiskey pulling down the right-hand pocket of his coat. In addition, while Terry doubted that he was much older than she was, he was wearing a scraggily-looking beard, which he caressed lovingly from time to

time. She hoped Paul would come soon. The four boys looked like kooks to her. And a girl could never tell what a kook would do. She'd met some who'd had the damndest ideas of fun. Especially when they were high on bennies or had been smoking tea.

She tried to will herself small so they wouldn't see her. It didn't help. Staggering slightly as they walked, the four boys descended the stairs and waded the sand to the edge of the blanket on which she sat and squatted on their heels looking at her.

"Well, what do you know?" the boy with the beard said. "You go along beating the bushes for days. Then all of a sudden you get lucky." He was philosophical about it. "That's life, I guess."

"Life," the boy squatting next to him echoed.

The beard took the fifth of whiskey from his sagging pocket, drank from the bottle and passed it. "Permit me to do the honors, miss. I'm Frankie the Beard. And this is Joe Joe and Harry and Solly. Say hi to the little lady, men."

"Hi," the three other boys said.

They sipped from the bottle in turn and passed it back to the boy with the beard, who returned it to his pocket. "I don't believe we caught your name, miss."

Terry put the transistor radio to her ear and sat snapping her fingers, pretending they didn't exist.

"Oh, come now, beautiful." Frankie the Beard scooped up a handful of sand and dribbled it from one hand to the other. "That isn't nice. I said we didn't catch your name."

Terry took the radio away from her ear and said sweetly, "That might just be because I didn't give any. Now go away. Beat it. Before you get into trouble. You are trespassing on private property."

Frankie continued to dribble sand from hand to hand. "Well, pardon us. We didn't know. You live here? You own this beach?"

"No. Not exactly," Terry admitted. "But my boy friend and I found it first. And he'll be here any minute."

"You don't say?" Solly said.

Joe Joe nodded sagely. "She did say so. You heard her, didn't you, Harry?"

The other youth had trouble focusing his eyes. "Say what?"

Terry tried to tug down the bottom of her playsuit to make that area of her body a little less attractive to the eye and only succeeded in directing more attention to it.

"Hey. You don't suppose she's got beer in that barrel, do you?" Frankie asked.

"You don't suppose she's got beer in that barrel, do you?" Joe Joe echoed. Then he and the other two youths rocked back and forth on their heels in laughter and slapped at the sand in front of them as they gave vent to their mirth.

Terry didn't see anything funny about the remark. If it was some sort of a private joke, she didn't get it. Nor did she like the way the boys were looking at her. If Paul didn't arrive, and soon, she could be in trouble. When boys got that look in their eyes they had only one thing in mind. Nor would there be any use in trying to reason with these creatures. Judging from their appearance and actions, in addition to being so drunk they barely knew what they were doing, all four of them were way out in space, way out where the goof balls lived.

This would have to happen today. Just when everything had been so beautiful. She tried again:

"Look. I mean it, fellows. Why don't you go away? If you try any funny stuff, you're just going to get yourselves in a jam. My boy friend will be here any minute. And he's six feet tall and weighs two hundred pounds and he's an All City letter man."

"You don't say," Frankie the Beard said politely.

Terry fought mounting panic as she kept tugging at the bottom of her playsuit. Staying with a boy was one thing. Being raped by four crumbs was something else. And even if it didn't get into the papers, this kind of thing happened every day in the week.

She could feel her flesh starting to crawl as her mind raced on. Just last Friday afternoon a girl in her home room had told her that, while it hadn't been in the papers because the school board was keeping it quiet, only the week before, in one of the South Side high schools, three dropouts who'd been drinking and joy popping all day had somehow managed to get into the building and hide without anyone seeing them. Then after the last bell had rung and everyone else had gone home, they'd dragged a fourteen-year-old girl who'd never been with a boy before into

the principal's office and, with one of them holding a knife at her throat, the others had stripped her of her clothes. With the girl pleading with them and screaming her head off with no one to hear her, they'd pushed her down on the principal's couch and beaten her so badly and stayed with her so many times and had forced her to perform so many unnatural acts, that when the school custodian found her the next morning the girl had been out of her mind and was hemorrhaging so badly internally that she'd almost died.

She didn't want that to happen to her. She couldn't let it happen. Not now.

"Please go away, boys," she pleaded.

"When we're ready," Frankie said. "Is that your car up on the drive, miss? The white 500XL with the red upholstery?"

"Yes," Terry was puzzled. "Why?"

"Did you just come down Highway 42 about an hour ago? Driving like a bat out of hell?"

"I was trying to make time," Terry admitted. "Why?"

"I'm asking the questions," Frankie said coldly. "Now tell me this. Did you cut in between a Buick and a Chevy to get to the turnoff road?"

"Yes."

"Well, we were the guys in the Chevy. And you damn near wrecked our car and we've been looking for you ever since. You see, we feel you owe us a little something."

"I'm sorry," Terry apologized. "I wasn't thinking." She picked up her purse. "And I'll pay for any damage I may have done to your car. It was just that I was in a hurry to get here."

"You see," Frankie the Beard explained to the others, "the little lady has a bad case of hot pants and she was anxious to get laid by her boy friend."

The other three boys laughed.

"Don't talk like that," Terry said.

She thought, wildly, of scrambling to her feet and trying to run but her legs felt suddenly numb. Besides, she doubted if she'd get very far. Nor would her telling them she was pregnant make any difference. The fact would only amuse them.

"Well, what do you think?" Frankie asked his companions. "Shall we show her a good time?"

"I vote yes," Solly said. "I'm that way just squatting here looking at her. So let's quit horsing around and get at it. The only question is which one goes first."

"I go first," Frankie insisted. "I bought the whiskey and the bennies. It was my car she almost wrecked."

"Okay," Joe Joe agreed. "You go first." He glanced up at the head of the stairs. "But what about her boy friend? What if he shows up while we're putting the blocks to her?"

"The hell with her boy friend," Frankie said. "I don't care how big he is. The four of us can take him." He looked back at Terry. "Well. How about it, blondie? Are you going to make it easy on yourself? Or do we have to beat on you a little?"

Terry sat with her crossed hands covering her lap, weeping silently, wishing, if for only a few minutes, that she could turn into a boy. Then would they be surprised. Just thinking about what was going to happen made her ache. It didn't seem possible that a morning that had started out so beautifully could turn into such a nightmare. Still, she didn't want them to beat her. That could be even worse for the baby. She might even lose it.

"Well, all right," she said finally. "If I have to." She added, "But I won't do it with anyone watching. I—I'd be too embarrassed."

"That makes sense," Frankie agreed. "Okay. We'll give you that much of a break." He took a switchblade from his pocket and handed it to Joe Joe. "You go up and stand by the gate. And if her boy friend shows, tell him that you're representing the owner and he has closed the beach to all outsiders."

"To all outsiders," Harry said thickly.

Joe Joe sat a moment longer admiring the girl on the blanket. Then opening the knife he got to his feet. "Whatever you say, Frankie." He waded through the sand to the stairs. "But don't be too long about it. I'm with Solly. I'm that way just looking at her. Oh, Jesus, am I that way."

Solly got to his feet with an effort. "What about me and Harry?"

"Yeah. What about us?" Harry asked.

"You'll get your turn," Frankie assured them. He picked up the blaring radio and tossed it to one of the youths. "But for right now, go listen to some music or take a walk or

something. I'm not going to use it all up. There's plenty here for all of us."

Wet-eyed, Terry watched the two boys, the one they called Solly holding to his ear the radio she'd bought for Paul, stagger down toward the edge of the lake. When they were alone, the remaining boy unbuckled the belt of his trousers and sat on the blanket beside her.

"Now let's see the merchandise, baby."

Weeping but passively permissive, Terry allowed him to unfasten and remove her halter and expose and play with her breasts. Numb with revulsion she allowed him to kiss them and her. She tensed instinctively, but didn't resist him when the bearded youth eased her back on the blanket and, after pulling her hands away from where they were, unfastened and stripped off the pants of her two-piece playsuit and tugged the skimpy crotch of her briefs aside.

"Nice. Very nice," he admired her as he first stroked, then explored the flat, crisp, taffy-colored triangle that he'd exposed.

If it has to be, it has to be, Terry told herself. It wasn't as if she was cherry. The best thing she could do for all concerned was to get this over with as soon as possible, then try to forget it had happened.

Attempting to ignore what was happening to her she continued to weep silently but made no resistance when, finally satisfied with his intimate explorations, the youth forced her quivering thighs apart and covered her nude body with his. But then, when, perspiring heavily now, too much in a hurry to possess her to even strip off the pulled-askew cotton briefs that along with her sandals was the only article of clothing he'd left her, he effected a rather awkward entrance, with the boy smell of him sour in her face and his wisp of a beard tickling her nose as he attempted to kiss her, when she felt his insistent flesh actually moving in hers, an innate sense of outrage caused her to revolt.

She must be out of her mind. She couldn't allow this to happen. She didn't care what the punks did to her. They could beat her until she was black and blue. They could cut her into little pieces. She couldn't, she wouldn't, go through with this. Not with Paul's child in her body. And when the punk raping her had finished, she still had to go through this same thing with the three other filthy young animals.

With the hot sun beating down on their joined bodies and the perspiring youth thrusting at her with ever mounting urgency, trying to force her to respond to him, Terry felt frantically for some weapon, and the fingers of one hand closed gratefully on the neck of the whiskey bottle protruding from the pocket of the blue blazer that Frankie the Beard hadn't bothered to discard.

Rape her, would he? Force her to be untrue to Paul? She lay a moment longer, quiescent, getting a good grip on the neck of the bottle. Then in a fury of pent-up contrition for being even an unwilling partner in what was taking place, Terry did three things in rapid succession.

She twisted her body sharply to one side to free it of the unwanted connection. She brought up one of her knees as hard as she could. She swung the bottle with sufficient force to stun the bearded youth momentarily and shower both of them with broken glass and whiskey.

Then without bothering to scoop up her clothes or any of her other possessions, she was on her feet and running across the dry sand, to the stairs, leaving her tormentor kneeling in agony on the blanket, clutching at himself with both hands as he screamed, "Stop her, one of you guys! The little bitch just kneed me, then slugged me with my own bottle."

At the top of the stairs, Terry looked back over her shoulder and decided she would have time to reach and start her car before Harry and Solly, racing up from the edge of the lake, could stop her.

She ran to her car and yanked the door open. Fortunately, she'd left her key in the ignition. She started the car, then remembered Joe Joe and looked over one bare shoulder and saw him running back down the drive from the gate. Deliberately, she raced the motor of her car to make sure the maneuver wouldn't kill it. Then she cramped the front wheels in a sharp U turn that took her out on the lawn so she could squeeze past the old Chevrolet the four boys had parked behind her car and clamped down on the accelerator.

Unfortunately the late winter snow and freeze and subsequent thaw had softened the lawn to a degree that caused one of the rear wheels to bog down and spin futilely, giving Joe Joe time to race up and grip the door on the driver's side.

His face flushed from the heat and breathing hard from running so fast, he demanded to know, "Where the hell do you think you're going mother naked? And what happened back there on the beach? What did you do to Frankie?"

Terry showed him the jagged piece of glass she was still clutching in one hand. "Let's just say I don't like to be laid without having any say in the matter." She made it as strong as she could," So I waited until Frankie was good and hard, then I cut it off with this. And if you try to stop me or use that knife, I'll do the same thing to you."

"You wouldn't," the youth gasped.

"Try me," Terry smiled sweetly.

By the sheer strength of her fear and determination she raced the engine until the wheel found traction and she was back on the crumbling brick drive and out through the wrought-iron gate, speeding south on the secondary road that would take her to the highway leading back to Chicago.

She'd driven less than a mile from the gate when reaction set in and her hands began to tremble so badly she could barely keep the car on the road. She glanced up into her rear-vision mirror to make sure the boys weren't following her, then pulled off the road and braked the car, but kept her engine running, crying aloud now, her pentup sobs shaking her body.

Then recovering a modicum of composure, she took one of the scarves she kept in the car to use over her hair from the glove compartment and fashioned a halter of sorts. That would take care of her upper body for the present but there was nothing she could do about her more important lower exposure.

She giggled hysterically through her tears as she adjusted the narrow strap of her briefs to cover as much of her as it would. And would nousey Mrs. Mason blow a fuse when she saw her walk past her window in nothing but a make-shift halter and a pair of almost as transparent cotton bikini briefs. So would Miss Daly. And both of them were bound to see her. Mrs. Mason was always looking out her window and she couldn't walk past the schoolteacher's door without her popping out into the hall to make sure she was all right.

Her wet eyes looking into the rear-vision mirror, Terry

sobbed violently for another moment or two. Not that she didn't appreciate the teacher's concern. She did. As she'd told her that morning, it was nice to know somebody cared.

Then, eager to be completely away from where she was and forestall any possibility of the boys following her in their car and finding out where she lived, she dried her eyes on a second scarf, folded the scarf over her lap and drove on as rapidly as the speed limit allowed. All she needed now was for some motorcycle officer to stop her for speeding and wind up running her in for indecent exposure and some juvenile-court judge to contact her father.

Intent on getting home as rapidly as she could, she suddenly realized, a short half mile from the highway, that she couldn't go home. She couldn't get into her apartment if she did. The maintenance man who had the master keys wasn't on duty on Sunday. The only key she had was in her purse. Her purse was back on the beach. And if anyone thought she was going back to get it, he was out of his mother-loving mind. She'd had all she wanted of Frankie the Crud and Company.

The best thing she could do, Terry decided, was to drive directly to one of her girl friends' house and honk her horn until the girl came out, then borrow a bra and a dress. A sudden thought appalled her. It might be wise if she asked the girl's mother if she could stay all night. At least until she could have the locks on her front and back doors changed.

Frankie the Crud didn't need to follow her to find out where she lived or that she lived alone. They knew that by now. Along with the keys to her apartment, her I.D. cards and her driver's license and the last letter from her father saying how much he worried about her living alone were also in her purse.

Terry pursued the line of thought. It would be just like Frankie the Beard to try to give her a bad time in an attempt to get even for what she'd done to him. Just thinking about what had happened incensed her. That nasty little mule-membered stud thought he was God Almighty in a Goldblatt's bargain-basement blazer. He hadn't even taken it off to rape her. Well, she hoped he'd had a good time. She'd heard that boys could die if they were interrupted

at the psychological moment. If so, she hoped he was dead. God knew he'd been breathing hard and digging for pay dirt when she'd done what she had.

She drove up the road leading to the highway and merged with the southbound traffic. And that brought up the matter of Paul. Should she or shouldn't she tell him what had happened. For that matter where had Paul been while it was taking place? This was the first time he'd ever been late. Up until today he'd always been waiting for her.

A vague but gathering suspicion clouded her troubled mind. Now that she thought of it, Paul hadn't been over-eager to go out to their beach today, especially after she'd told him on the phone that she had something very important to tell him, something concerning their future, and she hoped he'd be as happy about it as she was. He'd thought up all sorts of excuses.

Today was a holiday. The traffic would be bad. He really should go out to the cemetery with his folks. When he'd finally agreed to meet her, his voice had sounded strange and strained as he'd said:

"Okay. All right. I'll be there."

So where was he?

Sensing someone looking at her, Terry looked up and realized the wind had blown the folded scarf off her lap and the pleased but slightly incredulous driver leaning out of the high cab of the loaded produce semitrailer rumbling along beside her open car was so intent on what he could see that he was driving erratically.

After what had happened to her, in the mood she was in, she was tempted to tug the narrow strap aside and give him a really good look. Then maybe the dirty-minded old bastard would run his rig off the road and drown himself in a truck full of tomato puree.

The only trouble with that was he might kill someone else in the process or jackknife his rig across all the lanes and the in-bound traffic would be stalled for hours. In the interest of safe driving, to keep from becoming a Memorial Day weekend statistic, Terry gave him a dirty look, then covered her lap with the scarf and began looking for a turn-off where she could stop long enough to operate the mechanism that raised the convertible top.

She might be wise, Terry reflected, to keep a spare dress

or a pair of slacks in the back of her car, along with the spare tire, just in case she ever lost her pants again.

Not that she'd really lost her pants. She knew right where they were. They were back on the beach which Paul and she had called their own. Along with the twenty-dollar medical book, telling all about prenatal care, a brand-new, fresh-out-of-the-carton F.M.-A.M. transistor radio, her sunglasses, her cigarettes, a fifteen-dollar blanket, a ten-dollar beach bag and a purse containing seventy-six dollars, her home address and the keys to her apartment.

Terry wished she had a cigarette. She wished she had a dime so she could call Paul from a pay phone. She wished she knew *where* she was going.

When she'd started out this morning everything had been so crystal clear. Now everything was muddled. She didn't know what to do or where to go or where she stood. She didn't even know if Paul wanted the baby.

All she knew was she was pregnant.

"And I know you and your husband will be very happy, Mrs. Szabados," the doctor she'd gone to had told her. "There are no signs of complications and it should be a perfectly normal birth."

BOOK TWO

CHAPTER 9

To everything there is a season, and a
time to every purpose under the heaven;
A time to be born, and a time to die; a
time to plant, and a time to pluck up
that which is planted; a time to kill,
and a time to heal; a time to break down,
and a time to build up. . . .

ECCLESIASTES III:1-3

It was nice, Mike Adamowski thought, to have Althea out of jail and home for Memorial Day, even if she was spending most of the day in the tub, attempting to soak away the at least mentally accumulated dirt that had encrusted her slim, firm-breasted young body during her ten-day sentence for contempt of court.

"Ten days," Judge Harold Tyler Green had said.

And ten days she'd done. With no nonsense about it. After all, there wasn't much that he or any other lawyer could do about a contempt-of-court sentence. A contempt-of-court situation usually wasn't subject to appeal or a writ of habeas corpus or any of the other gambits and subterfuges in the field of legal jurisprudence. In the current instance, being as he was on the wrong side of the local political fence, there'd been nothing he could do but see that Althea was amply supplied with cigarettes and reading matter and, as her husband and her lawyer, visit her as often as regulations would permit.

Still, what could a man expect when he married a two-legged bleeding heart with an overdeveloped social conscience?

In the hope of finding cooler air, the lawyer carried the miniature television set to the table beside the easy chair in front of the window overlooking the parking space reserved

for the tenants of the building and continued to fiddle with the vertical hold as he tried to clear up the ball game he was watching, wondering, as he'd wondered a hundred times during their three-year marriage, how long this thing could continue.

There were times when he also wondered, and today was one of them, how he'd ever become so deeply involved in a world so entirely foreign to the one in which he'd once practiced law. This wasn't at all what he'd expected his life and career to be. And it had all happened so innocently.

There he'd been, three years ago, walking along LaSalle Street, wearing a smart Brooks Brothers' summer suit, a Countess Mara tie, and a new Abercombie & Fitch leghorn, perfectly content with things exactly as they were, with a small but profitable and rapidly growing practice in corporate law, when Althea had happened to him.

And "happened" was the word. All he'd done was stop to watch a squad of overworked, perspiring policemen attempt to disperse a group of youthful, but very articulate, bearded young male and long-haired female demonstrators who were staging a sitdown on the steps of the Board Of Trade.

All he'd been was curious. He remembered wondering, with some distaste, why the girls who participated in such demonstrations were usually such dogs and why they didn't go home and take a bubble bath and wash their hair. Then, suddenly, there Althea had been. A rose in a garden of thorns. With her skirt up to her waist and nothing under her skirt but her, and very embarrassed about it, as four equally embarrassed husky Irish-American policemen, their red faces even more florid than usual from trying to ignore the obvious, attempted to carry the struggling girl to a waiting paddy wagon.

Then Althea had seen him standing on the curb admiring her and it had been the one and only time he'd ever heard her be coarse or profane.

"Well, look, you frigging goddamn capitalistic fink," she'd cursed him. "If you've never seen one before, be my guest. How was I to know when I started out this morning that four Irish Cossacks were going to turn me upside down? Go ahead. Have a ball. But believe me, the next time I go limp in a sitdown, I'm going to stop off at the Art Institute first

and borrow a pair of tin drawers from one of the knights in armor.”

That was all there'd been to it. All except that he'd been sufficiently impressed by her beauty and candor and curious enough to wonder what a girl like Althea was doing with a bunch of unwashed wild-eyed radicals to whistle down a cab and spend a dollar and twenty cents to follow the paddy wagon she was in to the South State Street police station.

Then after Althea and the others had been booked for disorderly conduct and trespass, and he had managed to convince her he wasn't a run-of-the-police-court ambulance chaser, or interested solely in that portion of her anatomy she'd so charmingly, if unwillingly, displayed, she'd accepted him as her legal counsel. And after he had arranged to have her and her fellow demonstrators released on their own recognizance, one world had ended for him and another had begun.

During the weeks that followed, she'd allowed him to take her to dinner and to the races at Arlington Park, and to a ball game, and to see *Anna Karenina* at the Goodman Theatre and Gertrude Berg in, *Dear Me*, *The Sky Is Falling*.

Adamowski grimaced at the memory. Also to walk beside her, feeling like a goddamn Polish-American fool and hoping that none of his clients or any of his fellow officers in the Active Air Force Reserve saw him, in a very noisy United Mothers for Peace demonstration.

By the end of the second week he'd been so in love with her he hadn't known a tort from a merger, especially with Althea keeping him at a distance until she made up her mind how she felt about him.

It hadn't taken her long. That had been decided during the third week of his courtship. By then they'd been kissing good night, with Althea enjoying his kisses as much as he enjoyed kissing her, and equally as reluctant to say good night at her door.

But the catalyst that had brought them together had been her participation in a massive sit-in protesting the unfair hiring practices of a local wholesale bakery chain, said sit-in taking place in the firm's personnel office. Legally it was trespass. And she and her fellow demonstrators should have, would have, gone to jail if he hadn't come up with the technicality (since overruled by the court to which the

decision had been appealed) that the particular law under which Althea and the others had been arrested and charged was applicable only to vacant and fenced-in land.

That night she'd allowed him to take her to the Pump Room for a victory dinner. And after they'd had an excellent meal and a half dozen equally excellent drinks, and he had taken her home and she'd invited him in for a night cap, one thing had led to another and they'd awakened in her apartment shortly after noon the next day, reluctant to get up even then. Then when they'd finally dressed, although Althea had insisted that it wasn't necessary, he had insisted on driving down to Valparaiso and they had been married in a grimy room over a pool hall by a proletarian justice of the peace and they had lived, more or less, happily ever since.

After he'd adjusted the picture on the miniature screen to his satisfaction, Adamowski mixed a fresh drink for himself and one for Althea and carried them into the bathroom and exchanged one of the drinks for the empty glass on the rim of the tub.

"I thought you might be about ready. Compliments of the house and Ulysses S. Grant."

"Thank both you and the general, darling," the soaking girl smiled.

Adamowski kissed the lips she held up to be kissed, then sat on the closed lid of the facility, marveling as he always did when Althea was in the nude how even an omnipotent God, or nature, had managed to pack so much beauty and fire and femininity and social conscience into such a well-distributed one hundred pounds.

"What are you doing?" she asked him.

"Watching a ball game."

"Any good?"

"I've seen better. You going to stay in there all day?"

"I may."

"You're going to look like a prune."

"And you don't like prunes?"

"I'm crazy for prunes."

Althea laved water over her upper body with one hand as she picked up her drink with the other. "Could I ask you a personal question, mister?"

"Why not?"

"How long has it been since I told you how much I love you?"

Adamowski considered the question. "Well, that's a leading question and I don't think the court would allow it. But strictly off the record, I think I can say without fear of successful contradiction, it was about two hours ago. Right after we decided to skip breakfast."

"Would you rather have had ham and eggs?"

"Frankly, no."

"After all, sweetheart," Althea pointed out, "I was in jail for ten days."

"How well I know."

Althea continued to lave water over her breasts. "And while I don't want to be pedantic about it, you have no idea how lonely a virtuous, heterosexual wife can get, or what sort of tensions can build up in her when she is forced to spend ten long nights in a four-woman cell with only two lesbians, one streetwalker, and an assortment of cockroaches for company."

"Remind me to speak to Judge Green."

"Maybe I ought to picket his court."

Adamowski stood up and carried his drink to the door. "That would be all we need. Now you get out of there, hear me?"

The girl in the tub made mock obeisance. "To hear is to obey, oh lord and master."

Adamowski returned to the ball game and the easy chair in front of the open window. Althea was attempting to be glib and cheerful about the incident, but the past ten days had made a profound impression on her. Outside of the several instances when as one of a group of arrestees she'd had to wait in a police-station booking office or in a woman's detention tank for bail to be arranged, it had been her first experience with jails. Nor had it helped when she'd learned on her release that finks came in as large an assortment as cockroaches and that during her incarceration, obeying the first law of nature, self-preservation, the two noncapitalistic finks she'd been trying to protect had run out on her by copping a guilty plea in an exchange for a suspended sentence.

Becoming tired of the ball game, the lawyer turned to another channel and watched a segment of a rerun of the

preceding year's Indianapolis 500. It might be interesting, he thought, to be a racing-car driver. Although, being honest about it, he had no complaint with his own profession. He liked being an attorney-at-law. He liked the give and take and mental stimulation of a magistrates' or criminal court even more than he had corporate law.

Unfortunately, at least in his case, there was a wide gap in the financial compensation between the two branches of law. During the last year he had practiced corporate law, he'd paid a federal income tax on thirty-five thousand dollars. Now, traveling with Althea's motley crowd of professional agitators, starry-eyed idealists, juvenile exhibitionists, would-be do-gooders, and hard-core fellow travelers, he was lucky if he received any fee. Why should they pay him? All that they had to do was claim that their civil or constitutional rights were being violated and any of several national organizations active in those fields would provide them with free legal representation.

Adamowski sipped his drink, reflecting that if there was a pretty girl involved, even without half trying, a man could get himself into the damndest situations.

Three years ago he'd been an ambitious thirty-one-year-old lawyer; a typical bourgeois from the Polack patch back of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Galewood freight yards, a boy from a low-income family who had worked his own way through law school, who'd been determined to make it on his own. And he'd achieved his goal. During his last year in corporate practice, if he hadn't wanted to be on his own, he would have been welcomed as a junior partner, at least as an associate, in a half dozen top-flight local legal firms.

Now he was known as one of the hottest and smartest young lawyers dedicated to any forlorn cause as long as it was sufficiently left of center, and belligerent and articulate enough to invite official attention.

The hell of it was he only half-believed in three fourths of the causes for which he was currently fronting. Then only when he was fresh from Althea's arms.

Civil rights? There he went all the way. He firmly believed in and would fight for and, if necessary, die for the principle that, while all men might not have been created equal, all men, no matter the color of their skin, should

have equal access to identical education and economic and social opportunity.

But that didn't mean that people had to like everyone or want to associate with people with different backgrounds. Since the beginning of time, people had tended to gather into ethnic and national groups. After one hundred and eighty-three years in the alleged melting pot, groups of people were still known, and liked to be known, as Irish-Americans, Polish-Americans, Swedish-Americans, German-Americans, Sons of Finland and Lithuania, and Daughters of the American Revolution.

Nor did he agree with any of the groups dedicated to overthrowing law and order or replacing the American way of life with a foreign ideology. While there might be serious flaws in the system, it was the best one that had ever been conceived. And once the goose that laid the golden eggs had been destroyed, only utter chaos could result.

Surprising, however, despite the absence of substantial fees, he'd never lived so well. He'd never been so economically fat. But it was Althea's money, not his. How could he possibly have known when he'd first seen her struggling with four embarrassed policemen that her scorn of convention and flaming social conscience had been occasioned by forced feeding with a 24-carat gold spoon since the days when she had been given an Irish jaunting cart and a pair of Shetland ponies for a birthday present? This at an age when most kids considered themselves lucky if they got a doll or a baseball mitt.

Althea's wealthy father, however, had been smart. Recognizing his daughter's foreign (to her class) social tendencies and dedication to fringe causes, shortly before he'd died he'd set up an unbreakable trust fund that paid her a meager four thousand dollars a month, the principal sum to remain inviolate until she reached the mature age of thirty and, presumably, outgrew her predilection to sharing the wealth.

Adamowski doubted if the next seven years would abate or change Althea's convictions. They might kill him but they wouldn't change her and at least he would die happy.

Hearing a car in the drive under the window, Adamowski looked out and down. It was the long black Fleetwood limousine driven by one of the two old men who were the only callers that either he or Althea had ever seen visit old Mrs.

Lamar Mason in Apartment 101. They were another pair for the book. Both men had to be in their middle or late sixties, but both were spry and active and always dressed in what seemed to be uniform with them. In winter they wore form-fitting black dress overcoats with black velvet collars, fawn-colored spats, and fifty-dollar fawn-colored beaver hats with the brim dipped jauntily over one eye. In summer they both wore expensively tailored dark silk suits, white silk shirts with Countess Mara ties, two-tone white and black oxfords, and brightly banded straw sailor hats with four-inch-wide brims that hadn't been in style for over thirty years.

Adamowski watched them park their car and walk back up the drive, one of them carrying a florist's box filled with long-stemmed American beauties, and the other a five-pound box of candy. It might be interesting to know who they were. Their lined faces were vaguely familiar. He had a feeling he'd seen them before, had at least seen pictures of them, but the lawyer couldn't place the two old men. He decided they were probably retired civic leaders of another day. Judging from the way she lived and dressed, Mrs. Mason had that kind of money.

Suddenly bored with watching the racing cars roar around the familiar brick oval, Adamowski tried the other channels. He got the ball game again, a rock and roll program, then a telecast of the Memorial Day parade currently in progress.

He watched the parade for a few minutes, then turned off the set and sat looking out the window at the rubble marking the spots where the already demolished buildings in the block had stood and from which the block-square high-rise, multimillion dollar, ultramodern, cooperative apartment complex would soon rise.

He was pleased that the new apartment where he and Althea were moving had an unobstructed view of the lake. It had been years since he'd gone swimming in anything but the pool of a Turkish bath. He'd never been in a small boat in his life. But it was nice to be able to look out over water, especially on a day as hot as this one. Water gave at least an illusion of coolness.

With the television set turned off, he could hear that the

Staffords on the floor above and across the hall were still practicing for their Wednesday night opening in a local club. Before he had tuned in the ball game, they had been hanging Tom Dooley. Now they were hot on the tail of a blue-nosed fly. If practice made perfect and perfection brought recognition, the couple across the hall should be a sure-fire shoo-in in their chosen profession.

Adamowski was mildly amused. The garrulous old carnival man who lived with his daughter-in-law in the apartment next to the Staffords probably enjoyed their music. But he doubted if the Garcias or Mr. Rogers could say the same.

Not, Adamowski reflected, that the Garcias or Rogers had a corner on noise. They should live under a teenage high-school girl addicted to hi-fi.

He sat back in his chair, pleased, as Althea came out of the bathroom, her long hair twisted into a damp bun on the nape of her neck and her slight body vigorously toweled and powdered under the semitransparent dressing gown she had thrown over her shoulders.

"Feel better?" he asked her.

"Much better," she admitted. "You get a scum on you in those places. Even if you can't see it, you can feel it."

"Then you'd better stop telling off judges."

Althea sat on his lap and snuggled around until she was comfortable. "You know, you might have something there, Mike." She brushed his cheek with her lips. "Anyway, I promise there won't be any more picket lines or protests, at least until after we've moved. I didn't like that damn dirty old jail one little bit. Besides—"

"Besides what?"

"I missed you. I missed you terribly."

Adamowski tightened his arms around her. "I missed you."

Althea moved her head from side to side, then blew up at a wisp of hair that had escaped the bun. "Oh, boy. Did that long bath and all that whiskey you poured into me make me woozy. What are you trying to do? Ply me with liquor so you can wreak your will on me?"

Adamowski held one of his palms shoulder high. "Honor bright. Just trying to help you unwind. After last night and this morning, I haven't even one small wreak left."

"Hah," the girl scoffed. "I know better. I'm sitting on your lap." She snuggled even closer. "Besides, that's the way you got me. You got me drunk and seduced me. That's the way you big Polacks get and keep all your women. You subjugate us with whiskey and sex."

"Are you complaining?"

"No. Just stating a fact." Althea pressed her cheek to her husband's shirt front. "Mike?"

"Yes?"

"Do you know what I was thinking while I was in that place?"

"What were you thinking?"

"Well, neither of us are getting any younger. I'll be twenty-four on my next birthday and you'll be thirty-four."

"Practically ready for our Social Security."

"I'm serious. We've been married for three years. And, well, loving each other as much as we do, maybe it's time that we started a family."

Adamowski was silent for a long moment. A child could very well be the solution to their problem and open a new life for both of them. With a child of her own to care for and on whom to lavish her love, Althea wouldn't have time to feel sorry for so many other people.

"I'd like that very much," he said quietly.

Althea lifted her head and studied his eyes. "Are you certain, Mike?"

"I'm positive."

They kissed.

"All right," Althea said. "No more pills and we'll see what happens." She returned her cheek to his shirt front. "But right now, if it's all right with you, I'm afraid I'm going to have to take a little nap."

"You do that."

Althea started to make herself comfortable. Then as a particularly noisy car drove down the drive under the window, drowsily curious, she sat up and looked out and down.

"Don't tell me," Adamowski said, "that those two old characters who call on Mrs. Mason are leaving so soon. They usually stay at least an hour."

Althea sat back and snuggled down in his lap. "No. It wasn't anyone in the building. Just four funny-looking boys in an old car. But they must have made a mistake."

“How so?”

“After they looked around the parking lot, they drove out again.”

“Probably friends of the kid upstairs.”

Althea closed her eyes. “Could be. But her regular boy friend drives a better car. This one was an old heap of a Chevy.”

CHAPTER 10

On with the dance,
Let the orgy be perfectly proper.
Don't drink, smoke or spit on the floor,
And, say, keep your eye on the copper.

BATH HOUSE JOHN COUGHLIN
Alderman of the First Ward

Lou was always glad to see Grecko and Riley. Whenever the two men called, the huge first-floor living room, in which the élite of the sporting life of the city had once gathered night after night, seemed to come alive again.

For a brief period of illusion it was filled with men's voices and laughter, the subtle authority of custom-tailored suits, and the heady musk that all successful males, no matter their profession, exuded.

In her day, she'd known them all, the good, the weak, and the mighty; doctors, lawyers, merchants, chiefs, rich men, con men, judges, thieves. At one time or another almost every male in Chicago worth knowing had paid a visit to Lou Chandler's. If, as her coal-miner father had insisted, in those even more remote days back in Herrin, when you lay down with dogs you got up with fleas, at least those who had clung to her had been amusing ones. And they had made her independently wealthy.

She was worried because Pietro hadn't phoned, but pleased that Grecko and Riley had been thoughtful enough to brighten the holiday by bringing her candy and flowers.

Outside of the money she had in a half dozen banks, the real estate she owned, her portfolios of various blue-chip stocks, her jewels, and her memories of Lamar, the two old men were her only link with the past.

Then, too, both men had been great admirers of her husband. With reason. Lamar had been to each of the mobs

with whom he had been associated what Mr. Albert Einstein had been to higher mathematics, or Mr. Wernher von Braun to the space program. Abracadabra, the boys had called him. Because he had that kind of a mind. Because Lamar had been able to look at the tote board of any race track in the country and tell at a glance, to a dollar, how much more money had to be bet, and on which horse, for the big money layaway books to avoid an excessive payoff. Or, if the mob was running policy, how much it would take to change the last three numerals of the handle to keep some chump four-bit bettor from collecting a fortune on the lucky number that he'd picked out of a dream book.

Lou didn't know anyone who hadn't liked Lamar, herself included. But then she'd more reason to like him than any of the mobs for whom he'd worked. Even knowing what she was, Lamar had given her his name.

"I know," her deceased husband had said on the night he'd proposed marriage. "I know all about you, Lou. But then, in one way or another, all of us prostitute the talents with which we are born. I was supposed to be a professor of mathematics back in the Ivy League. Now look what I do for a living. In a way I guess you might say that I've screwed as many or more chumps than you have. So let's never mention that angle again."

And he hadn't, and neither had she. And Lamar had taken her to Paris on their honeymoon, and after she'd ood and ahed over the Eiffel Tower and the Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile, and had marveled over the facility in the bathroom of their hotel suite, thinking how handy it would have been while she'd been practicing her former profession, they'd gone on to a place called Lake Zurich before they'd come home and had lived happily ever after. And because she'd only been thirty-four at the time and still very much interested in such matters, and had wanted so badly to have a son for Lamar, she couldn't have been more pleased when Pietro had come along.

Lou smiled fondly at her callers. Because she'd been attempting to be true to Lamar's memory, and trying to set a good example for all her children, she'd been slightly dubious about the two men's intentions when she'd met Grecko and Riley at a stockholder's meeting of a local utility firm. But she hadn't needed to worry. Both of them were old men

now, at least ten years older than she was, with families and children and grandchildren of their own, and no longer interested in her as a prospective bed partner.

As they were to her, all she was to them was a link with the days when they had all been young, when she'd been the toast of the levee and they had swaggered the streets of Chicago with their deadly automatic pistols in the shoulder holsters under the left armpits of the three-hundred-dollar hand-tailored suits that both men still wore.

All she was to them was a fragrant and pleasant reminder of their days of wine and roses. She was also the widow of one of their best friends and they respected her as such.

As far as Lou knew, she and Grecko and Riley were all that were left of the old mob. Fortunately for them neither man had been overambitious. Equally as important, they'd known when to quit. When Repeal had come in, they'd read the writing on the wall and they'd gotten out of the rackets about the same time that she and Lamar had, Grecko with enough money put away to buy a chain of cut-rate dry-cleaning establishments, Riley with enough to start a string of restaurants which, when he'd finally sold them, had netted him better than four million dollars, after taxes.

If either man ever thought of the night at the lodge on Eagle River, or of any of the other nights on which they had engaged her professional services, they never mentioned them. They were now just good friends.

In the three years since she'd met them, after the long lapse of years, neither man had as much as told an off-color story in her presence, made an improper suggestion, or used a profane word.

Sometimes they took her to dinner at the Pump Room or to one of the other better restaurants in the neighborhood. Occasionally they drove into the Loop and attended a play or a movie and had a few drinks afterwards. Several times when the weather had been exceptionally nice, they'd gone for long drives in the country. Once they'd driven down to Turkey Run to view the fall foliage, and she'd spent the night in one suite while the two men had shared another.

Mostly they just sat and talked and drank tea and ate cookies and, when she knew they were coming, fancy finger sandwiches, talking about current events and market trends and what a mess the world was in and, of course, the good

old days. The good, old, long-gone days when gold-backed folding money had flown like cut bourbon and no self-respecting gungel, whatever his mob affiliation, would have been shot dead on the corner of State and Madison without a roll of at least five grand in his pocket, or dreamed of giving a wide-eyed cigarette girl less than a twenty-dollar bill for a package of Fatimas or a fifty-cent cigar.

They talked about ball games they had attended at Wrigley Field and Comiskey Park, and what a good pitcher Grover Alexander had been, and about the time that Babe Ruth had taken two strikes, then pointed his bat at the flagpole and had belted the next ball out of the southside park. And of the parties she'd given and of the bigshots who had attended. And about the time, out at the old Villa Venice, when an alderman had gotten so drunk that, after he'd fallen into a two-foot-deep fish pond, he'd screamed for the Coast Guard to come rescue him because a sixty-foot-long gold-colored whale was mistaking him for Jonah. And of how at the same party one of the girls had done such a good imitation of Eva Tanguay singing her famous "I Don't Care" song that a Loop talent agent who had been present had booked her into the then recently opened State and Lake Theatre and how she had made good in vaudeville and could have made good in pictures if she hadn't gone on the junk.

Lou could remember only two occasions when either man had recalled anything even mildly unpleasant. One of them had occurred while they were discussing a concert they'd attended and Grecko had lapsed into a more serious phase of the old days by recalling:

"Speaking of music reminds me of the time that Jake Lingle was killed in the underpass at Randolph Street. A joker named Leo Brothers was tagged for the job, but a lot of us, including the police, thought that Jack Zuta had planned the caper and they put a little heat on him.

"So what did Jack do? While he waits for the heat to die down, he drives up to that big frame hotel on Lake Nemahbin in Wisconsin. And there he was, with the tail of the canary still sticking out of his mouth, feeding a roll of nickles into an electric player piano when five of us walk in carrying a tommy-gun, a rifle, two shot guns, and a pair of forty-fives. And did we make a mess out of him."

The other time had been when they'd been talking about the Unione Siciliana and the power that it had wielded. Riley, who had never liked Sicilians and had liked them even less after what had happened in the flower shop on North State Street, had recalled the violent demise of Signores Guinta, Scalisi, and Albert Anselmi.

"There they were, see?" he'd said. "The three of them lying in a heap on the floorboards of this old Jordan sedan abandoned near that pond in Douglas Park when this rookie cop finds them. And there was a lot of talk at the time that they'd gotten too big for their britches and Big Al had put out a syndicate contract on them. But, after all, even if both Dion and Hymie were dead by then, there were some of us who remembered it was Mike Genna who'd held Dion's hand while Anselmi and Scalisi cut him down. And if Mike had still been around, he'd have been right there on the floorboards with them."

Such talk, though, was the exception. Usually when they ran out of conversation, they could always talk about their children and grandchildren and compare the latest pictures with which both old men were always liberally supplied.

This Memorial Day afternoon, with the tea steeped to her satisfaction, Lou poised her pink flowered Haviland tea pot over the three bone-china cups on the sterling silver tray resting on the massive, genuine-antique, gold-cupid-ornamented Louis XV coffee table, then paused to inquire:

"Are you certain, this being a holiday, you boys wouldn't like something a little stronger than tea?"

"I would for a fact, believe me, Lou," Grecko admitted. "Sometimes I wake up nights with the taste of the stuff in my mouth. But after the last cardiogram that my doctor ran, I'm lucky he still allows me to drink tea. Take a tip from a man who knows: don't ever get old."

"I'll try, Grecko," Lou promised.

Riley accepted his cup and cradled the fragile ware in one of his big hands. "That goes for me, too, Lou. Don't you ever poop out on us. You've no idea how much it means to be able to drop in and talk to someone who remembers."

"I enjoy having you," Lou smiled. "Don't think it doesn't get lonely here."

Grecko said, "And no more bawling, huh, Lou? Don't

go starting that again as soon as Riley and I are gone. There has to be some good reason why Pietro didn't phone."

Lou took a deep breath and held it before exhaling.

"That's what I'm afraid of. You see, in his last letter he wrote that the branch of the Italian ministry for which he works had appointed him chief liaison officer to the American press. And you know how newspapermen are. They have memories like elephants. And if Pietro should have mentioned my name, one of them is almost certain to tell him all about his precious *madre mia*, and what I did for a living when I was still known as Lou Chandler." She put a cigarette in her mouth and lit it. "Me and the Everleigh Sisters."

"Nix now," Riley protested. "Don't you go low-rating yourself, Lou. You never done nothing that half of them North Shore society women and most of the Hollywood movie queens don't do every night. The only difference is you were honest about it."

"And a pro," Lou said. She added, "Besides, they aren't Pietro's foster *madre mia*. He doesn't want them to come visit his wife and his children."

"It means a lot to you, doesn't it?"

"Yes, it does," Lou admitted. "Lamar and I didn't get to Rome." She shrugged. "Then how many mothers have a twenty-three-year-old-son and two grandchildren whom they've never seen?"

Riley moved his head from side to side. "He must have cost you a bundle. You know, paying for his keep and his education all these years. Then there's all the others. How many kids you got now, Lou?"

Lou filled her lungs with smoke and exhaled through her nose. "Eighteen the last time I wrote checks." She named them on her fingers. "Pietro, he was the first, and Giulia and Nicolao and Edoardo in Italy, scattered all over the country. Then Suzette and Valentin and Olivier and Rosamunde and Renaud and Jeannette and Geoffroi in France. And Hans and Marie in Germany. And Ito and Suzuki and Torii in Japan. And Miura and Han in Korea. And I just signed the papers last week for three kids in South Vietnam."

Riley was impressed. "Like I said, they must cost you a bundle."

"So what else have I to do with my money? Besides, I

like writing and receiving letters. It helps fill up the time."

"And all of them half American, huh?"

"Technically, I suppose. At least their fathers were G.I.'s. It seems that our Armed Forces don't provide for that particular form of entertainment. Which makes it a little rough on the local girls. And even rougher when the troops move on."

"That's for sure," Grecko agreed. "But when did you first get this idea, Lou?"

"About halfway through World War II. When Lamar and I found we couldn't have children."

"Now it makes sense."

"That was when we got Pietro. Through a local agency with branches all over the world. You agree to pay so much for a child's care and education, and they take it from there. Of course there's no personal contact. But the kids write you at least once a month. They almost always send you their pictures and ask for a picture of you. And after a period of years, you'd be surprised how much you get to care for each other."

"But if you like kids so much, Lou," Grecko puzzled, "why didn't you adopt some in this country?"

"Did you ever try to adopt a kid?"

"No."

"Lamar and I did. We filled out a half dozen applications with as many agencies, stating our income, our age, how long we'd been married, why we wanted to adopt a child. Then, after the forms had been processed, they'd send a caseworker to find out if we'd told the truth, usually some bright-eyed girl fresh out of college. And after she'd taken one look around, and Lamar had turned on the charm, she'd sit beaming, the kid we wanted as good as in the bassinets we'd bought. Until she asked what Lamar did for a living and what I'd done before we were married. Then when we told them, the girls would turn a bright shade of green and say that we would hear from them again. But of course we never did."

"Why didn't you lie?" Riley asked.

"We tried that once," Lou admitted. "But they check up on you. And when that particular caseworker came up with my record, I thought she was going to die of outraged purity."

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Grecko picked the cablegram from the coffee table and reread it. "He says Sunday, May 30 all right."

Riley suggested, "Maybe all the lines are busy. Maybe he can't get through. Maybe he'll call tomorrow morning."

"Don't bet on it," Lou said. She attempted to minimize her hurt. "Oh, well. He doesn't say anywhere in there that he wants me to come live with them, even visit them for a few months. That was the interpretation I put on it." She shrugged. "So come tomorrow, I'll start looking for a new apartment."

"It's for sure then," Grecko said. "They're tearing this place down?"

"That's what it said in the notice to vacate." Lou added thoughtfully, "And I won't be sorry to leave. It was a screw-ball idea moving back in here in the first place."

After that, conversation languished until Riley happened to look at his watch. "Oh, oh. If there's anything I hate to do it's drink tea and run. But I promised one of my daughters-in-law that I would sit with her little monsters while she and Pat go to a late-afternoon barbecue." The old man got to his feet. "But it's been a pleasure, like always, Lou. And remember if there is ever anything that Grecko and I can do, we're as close as your phone."

Grecko added, "And we mean anything."

"I'll remember," Lou said.

Because she was grateful for their friendship and concern, she walked them to the front door of the building and then on out onto the sidewalk with them.

Reluctant to leave, as Grecko cocked his bright-banded straw sailor hat at a jaunty angle, he essayed a bit of home-spun philosophy. "Don't let it get you down, Lou. We all have our problems. Like when we're young we don't realize how good we got it. We're always wanting something more. Then when we get old and can afford to do anything we want, the chances are some doc won't let us do it."

Riley was amused. "Listen to the old man. And to think I remember the time when he wasn't afraid of nothing. When, well maybe outside of Big Joe Saltis, Grecko used to be the toughest Polack in Chicago."

"Right back at you, you old Mick," Grecko said. "Who doesn't even dare put salt on his mashed potatoes because

his arteries are so hard. And who is acting as an unpaid baby-sitter for whose grandchildren tonight?"

Lou stood watching the two old men, determined to prove they still were men, stride down the sun-drenched sidewalk with a suggestion of their former swagger, and turn down the drive leading back to the parking area. Then, enjoying the heat of the afternoon sun on her face and hair she continued to stand in front of the building, waiting to wave goodbye when Grecko and Riley drove away.

She liked both men. They meant what they said. They would do anything for her. But when she looked back down the years, as she found herself doing so frequently now, there had only been one man in her life who had ever given her anything for nothing.

Grecko and Riley liked her and enjoyed being with her, but only because being with her gave them an ephemeral illusion of youth, because she shared the secret of a bawdy, virile era in their lives, because she reminded them of the days when, whatever else they might have been, they'd been men.

Lou continued the line of thought. And as big-hearted and generous and tolerant as Lamar had been, in those days she'd still been young and attractive and desirable. And his generosity and tolerance, and his proposal of marriage, had given him a permanent lease on and the exclusive and unlimited use of her body.

Only Frenchy LaTour had been different. The old carnival man, young carnival man in those days, had already had all she could give him, and had given her a very good time in exchange. After all the years that had passed, and all the other men she'd known, and the places she'd been and the things she'd seen and done, that one last week in Herrin remained a high point in her life.

Then with her right in his pistol pocket, with her so crazy about the man she would have done anything he wanted her to do, from running a doll rack to hustling for him, because he had genuinely believed she would be better off where she was than she would be with him, he'd kissed her goodbye and good luck. But before he left, without ever expecting to see her again, he'd tucked three fourths of his week's pay into her purse. Not to pay for his fun. He'd paid for that. Just because he was that sort of a man.

It would, Lou thought, be interesting to know how things would have turned out if Frenchy had taken her with him, or she had stayed in Herrin. But those were two things she'd never know.

She lifted one of her jeweled hands in farewell as Grecko and Riley drove out the drive and down the street, then turned to reenter the building and stood with one palm pressed to the glass of the swinging door as a youth coming up the sidewalk from the direction of the lake said:

"Pardon me, lady. Could I ask you a question?"

Lou studied the youth with distaste. He was badly in need of a haircut. He was growing, or attempting to grow, a beard. Both his feet and his upper body were bare, but he was wearing a badly wrinkled blue blazer that, even at the distance, reeked of whiskey. In addition he was carrying a vaguely familiar beach blanket and an equally as familiar woman's beach bag.

"What do you want to know?" Lou asked.

"Would you please tell me if this is the building in which Terry Jones lives?"

"Yes, it is," Lou admitted.

"Do you happen to know if she's home?"

"No, I don't. I saw her go out this morning, around ten o'clock, I believe. But I don't know if she's come back or not. Why?"

Frankie the Beard indicated the folded blanket and beach bag he was carrying. "It's like this lady. She went out on a date with a friend of mine and left these down on the beach and asked would I please put them in her apartment on my way home. And I thought maybe you could help me."

"I'm sorry. I don't have a key to her apartment."

The bearded youth dug in one of the side pockets of his blue blazer and came up with a leather key container. "I don't need a key, lady. Terry gave me her keys when she asked me to put this stuff inside. It's just I don't know which is her apartment."

Lou pushed the door open and walked in and pointed up the spiral staircase. "At the top of the stairs on the right-hand side. Apartment 303."

"Thank you. Thank you very much, lady," Frankie the Beard smiled as he started up the stairs. "I'll just put these things inside her door and be on my way."

Lou watched him as far as the second floor, then entered her own apartment and made certain that the door was securely closed and locked.

What Terry Jones did, or didn't do, wasn't any of her business. But as pretty and as shapely as she was, it did seem that the blonde teenager in apartment 303 could be a little more particular about the type of company she kept. She hoped the girl and her father knew what they were doing.

CHAPTER 11

ben-ze-drine . . . *n.* [*benz* + *ephedrine*], amphetamine, $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{CH}_2\text{CH}(\text{NH}_2)\text{CH}_3$, a derivative of ephedrine, used as an inhalant to relieve nasal congestion, and as a stimulant of the central nervous system: a trademark (Benzedrine)

WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD DICTIONARY

The sensation was mildly intriguing. Frankie could hear the faint slap of his bare feet on the metal risers of the spiral stairs but he felt as if he were walking a few inches above them—on air.

It must be, he thought, rather the way a hydrofoil operated. It would be nice to have a hydrofoil. Say a thirty- or a forty-footer, with a flying bridge. Like the ones he'd seen in Belmont Harbor. A boat like that would go well with his new blazer. If he had a boat, all he'd have to buy would be a white yachting cap. A captain's cap. One with a lot of gold braid.

Captain Frankie Masters. The title had a pleasant sound to it. Some day, when he had time, he'd have to look into the matter. Maybe he could steal a boat.

At the top of the stairs he stopped to listen. As far as he could tell there wasn't a sound coming from any of the apartments. The chances were, it being a holiday, none of the tenants was home. No one but the good-looking old broad on the first floor. And if anyone should pop out of a door and ask what he was doing in the building, all he had to do was tell the same story he'd told her.

He stopped to listen at the closed door of 301. He couldn't hear any sounds of movement. The interior of the apartment was as silent as the hall. He walked on down the balcony and checked the number on the next door. 303

was as void of sound as 301 had been. He tried the keys in the container until he found one that worked, then turned the knob and opened the door as silently as he could.

There was no one in the living room. No one called out, "Who's there?"

Frankie closed the door and leaned against it, experiencing difficulty in forcing his eyes to focus. It was almost as weird a sensation as climbing the stairs had been. One moment his eyes would zoom in on an object, magnifying it to twice its size. Then, without warning, everything would rush back and it was like looking at something far away, through a pinhole pricked in a piece of paper.

It was one of the nicest apartments he'd ever seen. The carpet was the color of gold and extended from wall to wall. It felt soft and yielding under his feet. The furniture looked expensive. One piece alone, a 23-inch color television set in a cabinet with a built-in hi-fi and an AM-FM radio, had cost at least a thousand dollars. No wonder the little blonde in a 500XL with seventy bucks in her purse acted like she was Miss Universe. Broads.

Frankie fought down a wave of self-pity as he laid the folded beach blanket and the heavy beach bag on the sofa. It was one lousy frigging world, that was for sure. You couldn't trust anyone.

"Well, all right. If I have to," the little blonde had told him. "But I won't do it with anyone watching. I'd be too embarrassed."

That was what she had said. So when he'd sent the other guys away, when he'd given the broad a break, what had she done? She'd hit him with his own bottle and hurt him bad with one of her knees. Just when he'd been about. When everyone knew a man could die from that.

He opened one of the doors in the living room. The bed in the room was made and covered with a fancy spread. There was a film of dust on the dresser. It was probably her father's bedroom and, like it said in the letter that they had found in Terry's purse, her father hadn't been home in months.

Frankie opened another door. This one was more like it. The bed was rumpled and the top sheet thrown back. There were a pair of stockings and a pair of briefs and a bra lying

on a chair by the bed. This was her room. He could smell her. The whole room smelled of girl.

He picked the briefs from the chair and held them for a moment, enjoying the feel of them in his hand. Nothing felt or smelled quite like a girl. Then, after using the wisp of fabric to wipe at the perspiration on his face and torso, he looked into the large and ornate bathroom connecting the two bedrooms.

And would the little blonde be surprised when she came home and found them waiting for her.

It was hot and breathlessly quiet in the apartment. Continuing to wipe at his face with the piece of fabric, Frankie returned to the living room and walked through it and down a short hall to the kitchen and the back door of the apartment.

There'd been a reason why they hadn't been able to get in through the back way. In addition to the regular lock there was a sliding bolt and a chain on the door. He shot the bolt and unhooked the chain and opened the door.

"Am I glad to see you," Joe Joe said.

"Where are Solly and Harry?" Frankie asked him.

Joe Joe pointed down the service stairwell. "Waiting on the next landing. You took so long we thought maybe something happened."

Hearing voices, the two youths climbed the stairs, Solly carrying a large brown paper sack in his arms. "We were beginning to think something happened to you," he repeated.

"I'm scared," Harry admitted.

Frankie motioned them into the kitchen. "What's to be scared of? All we're doing is returning all that junk she left out there on the beach."

Harry was still dubious. "Even so. I don't want to go back to St. Charles. I don't like that place."

"Relax," Frankie said. "You're not going anywhere. Even after we do what we came to do, she's not going to tell anyone about it. That's the way girls are. They will if they have to, but they don't want anyone to know. On account of they're too ashamed."

He started to close the door and hesitated, looking at the identical door on the far side of the service hall. "Where does that go to?"

"Into the next apartment, I guess," Joe Joe said. "There are two doors on every floor."

Frankie closed the door. "Anyone see you guys?"

Solly set the heavy paper bag he was carrying on the counter next to the sink. "Who's to see us? After we park the heap in the next block we cut across lots like we were heading for the lake. Then, just like you told us, we come up on the building from the back side, keeping real close to the wall. How about you? You have any trouble?"

"Naw," Frankie said, disdainfully. "No one saw me but some dumb old dame on the first floor. And I had my story all ready for her. I told her the little blonde ast me to drop off her stuff on my way home. I even showed her I had Terry's keys."

Harry continued to worry. "But what if when she comes home this old lady talks to her and tells her there is a boy up here?" He brushed his palms together in a gesture of motion. "She'll take off even faster than she did out there on the beach."

"Relax," Frankie repeated. He opened the brown paper bag and took out the two six-packs of beer and the two fifths of whiskey and the cold cuts and the sliced bread they'd bought with some of the money they'd found in Terry's purse. "I got that all figured out." He looked for and found a can opener and used it to open one of the cans of beer. "The old lady isn't going to tell her anything. On account she is going to think I went away again."

"I don't get you, Frankie," Joe Joe said. "Why should she think that?"

Frankie drank from the can of beer he'd opened, then wiped his lips with the back of his hand. "Because now that you guys are in I'm going to walk back down the stairs and right past her window and down the drive and come up the back stairs."

"Smart. That's smart," Joe Joe said.

Frankie finished the can of beer and set it on the sink and walked down the spiral stairs and was back in the kitchen within five minutes, perspiring heavily, but even prouder of Frankie.

"Did she see you?" Joe Joe asked.

"I made sure," Frankie said. "I whistled all the way down the last flight of stairs. Then I walked out the front door

and past her window. Sure enough, there she was. You know, kind of peeking out at me from between the drapes."

Joe Joe was impressed. "Guts. That's what you've got, Frankie. Guts."

Frankie opened another can of beer and, carrying it and one of the bottles of whiskey, swaggered into the living room. "Now all we have to do is wait."

"Nice. Very nice." Solly admired the living room.

"Just like her," Joe Joe said.

"But what if she doesn't come home?" Harry asked.

Frankie was impatient with him. "For Crize sake stop worrying, will you, Harry? Sooner or later, she *has* to come home. Right now, she's probably borrowing some clothes from a girl friend."

He opened the bottle of whiskey and washed a sip of whiskey down with beer, then passed the bottle to Solly and walked through the bedroom containing the unmade bed to the bathroom. Just thinking about what was going to happen when Terry did come home caused him to have trouble using the facility.

He hoped that the little blonde came home soon. He couldn't take much more of being the way he was without doing something about it. And he'd promised himself he wouldn't do that again. And he hadn't. Not since his step-father had caught him at it and told him that it might make him impotent.

Frankie studied his reflection in the bathroom mirror. The fellows, though, thought he was really something. "Guts. That's what you've got, Frankie. Guts." That was what Joe Joe had said.

He flushed the facility, then fondled the few scraggly hairs on his chin. What was more the fellows thought he'd stayed with lots of girls, just like he boasted he had. He'd be too embarrassed to show his face around school again if they ever found out the truth, that outside of the usual kid stuff most of the girls he had dated would stand for, he had only scored twice.

And one of them hadn't counted. That had been with his cousin, Martha, in the bathroom of her parent's home the afternoon there'd been no one in the apartment except them. Martha, stark naked from taking a bath, with her breasts and her hair just beginning to show, had been as

excited and curious as he was. But even after he had taken off his clothes and they had spent all the rest of the afternoon examining and handling each other and putting their parts together, because both of them had been so young, nothing had really happened. All it had been was pleasant. All either of them had gotten out of it was sore. And while Martha had been plenty willing, before they had gotten a chance to do it again, her dumb parents had moved to Denver.

The bearded youth sucked in his breath at the thought of the one other time he'd really gone all the way. That had really been something—with the young Bohunk cleaning woman whom the employment agency had sent out the Saturday morning after his folks had the big party to celebrate his stepfather's having been made a vice-president of the Lullaby-Di-Dee Service, and before his mother had quit her job.

It being a Saturday morning, there was no school, and when his mother had left the apartment, she'd told him, "I'll try to get home as soon as I can. But while I'm gone you keep your eyes on her, Frankie. She looks like a drinker to me. Besides, if you don't watch them every minute, all temporary cleaning women steal you blind."

So he'd watched her. And the cleaning woman, a pleasant-faced if somewhat stocky and blowsy-looking brunette in her middle or late twenties had seemed rather amused by his attention as he'd followed her from room to room.

She'd asked where he went to school and what year he was in and what he was going to be when he was a man, and how old he was, and stuff like that. But by then he hadn't been watching to see if she took a drink or stole anything. He'd been too intrigued by the discovery she wasn't wearing a brassiere and that everytime she stooped over to pick up anything, the top part of her dress was so loose that it fell away from her body and he could see both of her breasts, including her big purple nipples. This while the bottom part of her dress was so tight and so short that if he was standing in back of her when she bent over, he could see the rolled hem of her panties and almost all of the way up her thighs.

It had been about noon when it happened. The woman was a good worker and by then she'd washed up all the

dishes and the glasses and had vacuumed the floors and made the beds, and was just starting to dust the living room when she'd turned and seeing him admiring her had said:

"I kind of fire you up, don't I, sonny?"

"Yes," he'd admitted.

"You get that way just looking at me?"

"Yes."

"And you'd like a little, huh? You'd like to jump me."

Flat out. Just like that. As if it was the most common thing in the world. And not knowing what to say, he'd nodded.

"That happens," she'd said casually. "You'd be surprised how much extra I pick up that way. But it's usually with some stiff-horned old goat whose wife has forgotten why the guy married her in the first place. How old did you say you were?"

"I was sixteen my last birthday."

"You ever stay with a woman before?"

"Yeah. Sure. Lots of times," he'd lied.

"Starting a little young, aren't you?"

"I wouldn't know."

"You willing to pay ten bucks?"

Frankie's cheeks flushed at the memory. Knowing exactly how much he had left of his monthly allowance, he'd been so afraid the woman would think he was cheap he'd almost wished she hadn't seen him admiring her. "I'm sorry," he'd finally blurted out. "All I have is eight dollars. A five-dollar bill and three ones."

"Well, I usually get ten," she'd said. "But seeing as you're just a kid, okay." Then with him following closely behind her, almost as if he was being towed by some invisible draw bar, she'd led the way into his parents' bedroom and had folded back the spread and the top sheet. "All right. Let's get it over before your mother comes home."

Then, after he'd given her the money and she had insisted on examining him to make certain he didn't have a disease and had complimented him for being so big at sixteen, while he'd watched with his heart pounding so hard he was afraid it would pop out of his chest, the woman had pulled her dress over her head and had worked her panties down over her hips and had lain back crosswise on the bed with her knees drawn up and everything that she had showing.

"There you are, sonny," she'd told him. "Have fun."

He'd seen and he'd explored Martha. He'd sent away for and he'd looked at a lot of dirty pictures. Since he'd begun to be able to have orgasms, he'd heavy-petted with a number of girls. He'd even caught brief glimpses of their immature bodies while they had manipulated each other in the back seat of his car or on the dusty stairs of the dimly lighted hallways of the buildings in which they lived. But this was the first time he'd ever seen a grown woman completely naked and the sight of the young cleaning woman's massive breasts and her thick blue-veined inner thighs and the lush mound of brown hair between them had gotten him so excited he'd started to shake all over.

For a moment he'd thought he was going to stop breathing. Even when he had managed to undress and lower himself on top of her and she'd splayed her thighs even wider to receive him, he'd been so nervous he couldn't find the place and she'd had to reach down between them and help him.

Then when he had managed to mount her, he'd become so excited watching his own swollen flesh disappearing into and emerging, briefly, from the alternately expanding and contracting sheath under the mound of brown hair, although he had tried to prolong it, he'd known his climactic almost immediately.

And he'd never known anything like it. It hadn't been anything at all like heavy petting with a girl. He'd never experienced such a feeling of power. It was as if everything solid inside him had dissolved and flooded down through his rigid member to overflow and spurt out of the normally more than adequate channel between the woman's splayed and mechanically thrusting thighs.

But then when still excited, without breaking the contact, he'd kissed Rosa on the mouth and told her how wonderful it had been, and how beautiful she was, and, because it had all happened so fast, had begged her to let him do it again, the cleaning woman had been insulted.

"What do you think I am, cheap or something?" she'd asked him as she'd pushed up at his chest. You got what you paid for, sonny? Holy Jesus, did you get what you paid for. Now let me up so I can take care of myself."

Then, after she'd taken care of herself in the bathroom

and had remade the bed, she'd put on her pants and her dress and, furtive-eyed now and distant, she'd returned to dusting the living room, just as if nothing had happened.

With his eight bucks in the top of one of her stockings.

Frankie fought down an impulse to weep. And that had been the only time he'd ever gone all the way with a woman. The only time up until today, when they'd spotted the taffy-haired blonde on the beach. Then, while he still thought he'd handled the preliminaries very well, she'd twisted away and out from under him. After she'd practically promised.

He popped another "bennie" into his mouth. Bitches. That's what all women were. Bitches.

"Hey. What's going on in there?" Solly called from the living room. "You sick or something, Frankie?"

"No," Frankie called back. "I'm just fine."

Still having difficulty in focusing his eyes, he continued to study his reflection in the mirror. Maybe the little blonde broad hadn't liked his beard. Maybe it had tickled her or something. Most of the girls he dated didn't like it. They were as bad as his folks. And his stepfather claimed it made him look like a creep. It could be. One thing was certain: growing a beard hadn't done a thing for him. All it had done was cost him money. And it had almost cost him a beating.

On impulse, Frankie opened the door of the medicine cabinet and found some shaving cream and a safety razor and a package of blades. He put a fresh blade in the razor, then ran hot water in the bowl and brushed lather on his chin.

His beard was like everything else that ever happened to him. No matter how hard he tried, nothing ever came out quite right. And he'd had such high hopes for his beard.

Ten bucks a day and your keep and all the tail you can use, either white or colored. Take your choice. But the colored girls are the best, and the blacker they are, the better. What I mean, they practically screw you to death. And all you have to do is grow a beard and join one of the civil-right's marches.

That was the word that had been going around school. Everyone had been talking about it. He'd heard it from at least a dozen guys. So what had he done? He'd grown the best beard that he could. Then he'd skipped school for a

week and had spent almost all of his month's allowance on gasoline and a new tire to drive south and join the next march that he'd heard of.

A wave of self-pity swept him as he ran the razor over the lather on his chin. And no one could say that he hadn't been sincere. He'd walked all of one day in the hot sun, between a nun and an Episcopal priest, carrying a heavy placard and singing "We Shall Overcome" and "Black and White Together" right along with the best of them. If, once in a while he'd thought about what a good time he was going to have that night and had picked out some of the girls with whom he meant to have it, that was his own business.

There had been three girls in particular who had appealed to him. Two of them had been sisters about his own age, black as black could be, but with big flashy eyes and cute little heinies, and boobies that had bobbed as they'd marched and sung. The third had been slightly older, sort of a light-coffee-colored young woman, if you put cream in your coffee. One of the other marchers had told him that she taught in a college somewhere and had a Ph.D. degree in psychiatry, but he'd never seen any woman, even a movie star, with a more beautiful face or body.

He'd been in a state of sexual excitement all day, thinking how nice it was going to be with any one, or all, of them. Then after they'd marched all day and had stopped for the night, so tired he could barely put one foot ahead of the other, but still randy and ready to go, without even waiting for supper, before one of the other marchers latched on to the girls he'd picked, he'd gotten right down to business.

"How about it, girls?" he'd asked the sisters. "Let's go over there in the bushes and tear off a couple of quick ones before we eat, then the three of us can shack up together all night."

But the sisters had only giggled and told him to stop that kind of talk. And when he'd propositioned her, all the older girl had said was:

"You must be sick, little man. You must be really sick. Now why don't you go away and stop bothering me before I have to call the marshal in charge of the march?"

The incident still infuriated Frankie. Thinking she was putting him on, that she *had* to be putting him on, he'd slipped his hand under her skirt to feel her up a little and

get her as excited as he was. But before he could even get his hand on it, the light-colored nigger bitch had done just what she said she would. She'd yelled for the guy who was in charge of the march and she'd told him what he'd said and done and tried to do, and for a moment he'd thought that the guy was going to hit him.

But he hadn't. All that the two-hundred-pound, six-foot-tall, soft-spoken black bastard had done was walk him away from the tents and the cooking fires and back to the highway and tell him that, while they deeply appreciated his coming down to help them, he was afraid that he was laboring under a slight misapprehension and perhaps he had better go home before he got himself into serious trouble.

This before he'd jumped one colored girl, or a white one for that matter, or had his supper, or even met the guy who was paying the ten dollars.

Frankie fingered his chin to make certain he'd shaved off the last of the unpleasant memory. Piss on such nonfrigging people. They should still all be slaves, or sent back to Africa or somewhere. Who did they think they were?

He rinsed his face with hot water and dried it. Then, after searching the medicine cabinet for and finding a roll of adhesive tape, he dropped the roll into one of the pockets of his blazer and walking out into the bedroom stood looking at the rumpled bed.

Miss Terry Jones didn't know it yet. She wouldn't know until she got home. But the stuck-up little bitch was going to make up for a lot of the stinking things that had happened to him. With interest.

And he didn't care how long it took him to get even. Tomorrow was another holiday. None of them had to be back in school until Tuesday.

He looked away from the bed as Solly entered the room. "Now what?"

The other youth pressed a finger to his lips. "Shh. Not so loud. I think the little blonde broad just came in the back door."

CHAPTER 12

The movement to help Cuba gain its independence was speeded up by the sinking of the *U.S.S. Maine* in Havana harbor. The U.S. declared war on Spain April 25, 1898. . . . The Teller Amendment obligated the U.S. to respect Cuban independence. . . . The Platt amendment to a treaty, 1903, committed the U.S. to intervene if Cuban independence was threatened. . . .

On April 17, 1961, an invasion of Cuba by Cuban exiles attempting to overthrow the regime of self-admitted Communist Premier Fidel Castro was crushed when promised U.S. air cover failed to materialize. . . . After the execution of hundreds of dissidents and ousted moderates in the government, all private enterprise was brought under control by a Central Planning Board and all Cuban banks and industrial companies were nationalized, including an estimated \$1 billion worth of U.S.-owned properties. . . .

ALMANAC 1965

There were many things about the Estados Unidos de la América del Norte, and Chicago, that puzzled Doña Maria Dorotea de Carvajal Vargas Garcia. It was, however, the *insano* schedule of mealtimes and the complete lack of trained servants, especially a competent cook and an all-wise, all-foreseeing *mayordomo* that caused her the most concern.

Because Rodolfo had told her this was to be their new way of life and they would have to follow the customs of their new country, and because she sincerely loved and wanted to please her husband, she did the best she could. But when, during almost twenty-five years of marriage, one had barely paused in a kitchen for longer than it took to

give the cook a list of the names of the guests who would dine with them that evening, this cooking her own and Rodolfo's meals was completely new to her.

She jabbed thoughtfully at the chicken stewing in its nest of yellow rice. Unable to pierce the chicken with the tines of the fork, her mood turned contemplative. Not that Rodolfo complained about the meals she served him. Rodolfo seldom complained about anything. That much, the Blessed Virgin be praised, was still hers. Even now, when she no longer had the beauty she once had, now when men no longer gasped or held their breath when she entered a room, Rodolfo was as kind and as gentle with her, as much her lover as he had been on the day that Father León had married them in the flower-filled family chapel on her father's two-thousand-acre sugar plantation.

"I, Rodolfo, take thee, Maria," he'd promised.

And he'd held her close to his heart ever since.

Doña Maria used the back of her free hand to brush a wisp of hair out of her eyes as she continued to peer at the chicken stewing in the pot, wondering if, as tough as it seemed to be, it would be at least edible by five o'clock.

Suddenly inspired, she searched through the clutter in the kitchen cabinet for the small bottle of powder that the clerk in the supermarket had assured her would tenderize any meat. According to the label on the bottle, the powder contained salt, sugar, tricalcium phosphate, and vegetable enzyme of papaya. Papaya she knew. They had grown lots of papayas in Cuba.

The directions for using the tenderizer were simple. One moistened the meat with water. The chicken was already in water. Next, one sprinkled the powder over the entire surface of the meat, at the rate of one half a teaspoon per pound. To insure penetration and retain the meat juices, one pierced the meat deeply with a fork. Unfortunately, she couldn't get the tines of a fork into the chicken, but it could be that she could overcome that small difficulty. If one half a teaspoon of powder per pound would make the meat on which it was sprinkled tender, the whole bottle should make the chicken divine.

Doña Maria unscrewed the cap, pried off the plastic sprinkler top, and poured the entire contents of the bottle into the pot. And that took care of the chicken.

For once, Rodolfo should enjoy his meal. He might even compliment her. But he wouldn't like her so much in the morning, not when he discovered that she had forgotten to send out the laundry and the cleaning.

She considered attempting to wash and iron a shirt for him, but decided she hadn't better. The last time she'd tried that it hadn't come out at all well. Not that she was entirely to blame. Until the bearded barbarian had taken over her country, she'd never washed or pressed anything in her life. There'd been no need for such nonsense. Her personal maid had taken care of such things.

To get away from the heat of the stove, she walked to the open window and stood looking out over the lake. So many things in this new country, in this new way of life, confused her.

One thing in particular bothered her. Because one wasn't facile in their tongue and it sometimes took you a few seconds to mentally transpose what they'd said into Spanish, so many Norte Americanos assumed you were either uneducated or *estúpida*.

The nice fat Jewish man who lived in the apartment next to theirs was a good example of that. Both she and Rodolfo liked Señor Rogers. He was a good neighbor. But when they'd met him in the parking area on their return from Mass this morning, he'd made an *especial* point of informing them of a fact of which they were both perfectly cognizant.

Doña Maria permitted herself to be gently indignant. *Por Dios*. She'd known about Memorial Day since she'd been a child. Convent-educated, she could still rattle off most of the dates and facts as if the Mother Superior were listening.

But just how did one tell one's neighbor, whose feelings one was afraid had been hurt, that one hadn't meant to be rude?

At the time that Señor Rogers, meaning to be friendly, had spoken so graciously to them, their minds had been on other matters. Then, by the time they'd reached the sidewalk, both she and Rodolfo had worried that their neighbor might have thought they hadn't understood what he'd said, or appreciated his attempt to be friendly. But when they had turned and smiled and laughed to indicate that they understood, that had only made matters worse. Judging from the

way the man had stood scowling back at them, trying to cover himself with his hands, acting as if his fundamental instead of his bare knees were showing, Señor Rogers had obviously thought they were laughing at his attire.

Doña Maria was honest with herself. He *had* looked rather funny. After all, there was a time when a man was supposed to have outgrown short pants.

She returned to the stove, lifted the lid of the pot, then poked hopefully at the chicken with the sharp tines of the kitchen fork. So far, the tenderizer hadn't done anything for the chicken. But either it or too much cooking had made a mess of the yellow rice and tomatoes and green peppers. To say nothing of the pimientos and green peas.

As usual, she'd probably put the lesser ingredients in too soon. No matter. If the chicken ever became tender, she could put it in another pot and start over with fresh vegetables.

To make certain she hadn't forgotten them, she added more garlic pods and another wineglass of sherry to maintain the level of the liquid. Then, after recovering the pot, she pushed open the swinging kitchen door and walked into the living room and found Rodolfo still napping on the couch.

For want of anything better to do, Doña Maria continued across the room and opened the hall door and looked out. For this one afternoon the huge hall was blissfully quiet. The hall, somehow reflecting the former grandeur of the building when it had been a private *casa*, and the view of the lake were the only two things about their current *habitación* she liked.

She would, Doña Maria reflected, be quite content when the time came for them to move, even if Rodolfo had told her it would have to be into much less expensive quarters. This *edificio* was really something. Usually, when the young couple who shared the *apartamento* above theirs weren't strumming on their *guitarras* and singing about poor people who were about to be hung, or who worked in mines and were in debt to the company store, the girl child who lived across the hall, on the third floor, had the volume of her record player turned up so loud the whole building was filled with sound.

It wasn't that she disliked the child. On the contrary. But

there was so much a young girl had to learn and the little Señorita Jones was so alone and uninstructed most of the time.

Doña Maria's eyes moved on to the closed door of apartment 301. Fortunately, as befitted a devout *católica* young woman, Señorita Daly tried to keep as close an eye on the motherless child as she could.

Doña Maria wondered if Señorita Daly was indisposed and that was the reason why she and Rodolfo hadn't seen her at Mass. Then she remembered. When she had met one of the two other young women who shared the apartment with Señorita Daly, earlier in the week, the young teacher had confided they were all going to some place she'd called the "Dunes" over the three-day holiday.

Doña Maria looked back at the closed door of apartment 303. On the other hand, there were many things worse than noise. When young people were laughing and singing and dancing, one could usually relax. It was when things became too quiet that one began to worry.

She closed the door and walked over to the couch. Poor Rodolfo. Even in his sleep, he looked old and tired and baffled. As with herself, this not having any money was so new to him. Noticing he was perspiring, she got her fan and drew a chair up to the couch and sat fanning her husband's face.

Even now that they were gone, seemingly forever, there'd been a lot to say for the old days. When she'd been a girl, there'd been certain things one did and others that one didn't do. And the rules had been very simple. A girl tried to be as modest as she could, avoid any unnecessary exposure of her more personal charms and, if possible, come to her husband a *doncella*.

She'd been a virgin when Father León had made her and Rodolfo man and wife. She'd never known any other man's kiss, or felt any arms but his around her. But she couldn't see that it had done her any harm or she'd missed much of anything. After twenty-five years of marriage, she was still content.

Nor had she ever lacked for masculine attention. Sacred Name, no! Even now that she'd lost most of her looks and was beginning to bulge where she should be flat and sag where she once had protruded, when Rodolfo called her

bella adorada mía and looked at her that way, she still knew what to expect.

All in all, Doña Maria decided, many of the old ways had been best. And it wasn't that the girls of her day had been any more virtuous than girls facing the same problems today. From what she'd observed and read, since the beginning of time, girls and young women, rich or poor, especially if they were well favored, had always faced the same problem, to give or not to give themselves to the men whom they loved. And women basically being givers, and surrender a major part of love, their tendency was to give.

Who would deny a man dying of thirst a glass of *vino*?

Doña Maria was mildly amused as she continued to fan her sleeping husband's face. But in the branch of society into which she had been born, that particular problem had never been of much concern to her. Of interest, *sí*. But not concern.

Except in the one instance when she had almost yielded to a young girl's natural inclination, there never had been much that she could do about the matter. However many men she might have wanted to save from dying of thirst, the *vino* bottle had always been kept too tightly corked and inaccessible for her to do more than contemplate the subject. Her father had seen to that.

Unlike the girl child across the hall whose father paid little or no attention to what she did, again except for the one instance, she couldn't remember five minutes from the time she'd attained puberty until her wedding night during which she could have been immoral with a man if she had wanted to be.

First there had been the convent and the sisters and the confessional. And when, from her early childhood, a girl had been raised to be terrified over having to confess that she'd forgotten to say her prayers or had been rude to her parents or one of her teachers, how could she possibly enter a confessional booth and confess that she had been guilty of an impropriety with a boy?

Then when she had come out in society, no matter where she'd gone or what she'd done, there had always been an alert *duenna* in the background. And because even *duennas* had to sleep, frustrating as it was, there had been always bars on the balcony window of her *dormitorio*. It wasn't that her

father hadn't trusted her. It was because he'd been enough of a man of the world to know that a young girl's trusting heart and curiosity and natural inclination to be generous could so readily involve the even more tender and intimate portions of her *anatomía*.

As in the instance of the handsome *capitán* of the Brazilian polo team with whom she'd fallen in love when she'd just turned seventeen. As Doña Maria recalled, their plan had been for her to slip out of her room one midnight and make her way to the back gate of the *hacienda's* formal garden, where he would be waiting with a car. Then, knowing her father would try to stop them, they were to have driven to Havana, where they would board a ship that would take them to his country, where he had sworn on his honor as a gentleman they would be married in the church of Our Lady of Candelaria.

It had all been very romantic. On the night appointed she'd had little trouble in getting out of her room and even less trouble in reaching the gate. And when she'd reached the gate, he'd been waiting. But before her would-be lover could even get out of his car to take her in his arms and kiss her for the first time, ay` Dios, her father, immaculate in formal evening dress, the moonlight shining on his silvering hair, had stepped out from behind the bole of a palm tree holding a *pistola* that had looked at least two feet long.

"*Un momento, señor,*" he had addressed the handsome Brazilian politely. "But may I remind you of the fact that, if you attempt to depart with my daughter, however much it may distress me, as a father there is only one course of action that I can pursue."

"What's that?" the man had asked nervously.

"To blow your head off, *señor,*" her father had continued politely. "And now as the hour is late, and I dislike keeping a delicate child out in the unhealthy night air, may I suggest that you start the motor of your car and drive on. And when you return to your own country, please do remember to give my very best regards to your most charming *señora.*"

His *señora*. Doña Maria was still incensed at the thought. And the *bestia* had sworn to her that she was the first and only girl whom he had ever loved.

As she remembered, she'd fled to her room, brokenheart-

ed. She'd been brokenhearted for almost a week. Now she couldn't even remember the man's name.

Then she had met Rodolfo. Doña Maria brushed her sleeping husband's cheek with her lips. Poor Rodolfo. From the moment they'd met he'd been as madly in love with her as she had been with him. But the customs of their country and their day had given both of them a bad time. Until Father León had made it proper and legal, no matter how thirsty Rodolfo had gotten nor how willing she had been to assuage his thirst, there'd been nothing they could do about it.

But, Doña Maria reflected, while the waiting might have cost them a few sleepless nights, it hadn't killed either of them. Instead of the physical relationship becoming commonplace, it had become something very precious and sacred. If she lived to be *ciento y uno*, she would never forget her wedding night.

She stopped fanning her husband's face and fanned her own.

She'd thought the last of the wedding guests would never leave. Then after she'd kissed her father good night, the last time she would ever kiss any man as a maiden, and her father had given her his blessings, attempting to be casual about it but her knees giving under her as she'd walked, she'd climbed the long stairs to the second floor and the big master bedroom and the huge four-poster bed that was to be hers and Rodolfo's.

Their bed not just for that night, their bed for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death parted them.

As she remembered, she'd cried for a few minutes because she was so happy. Then after Luisa, her personal maid, had combed and brushed her hair and between them they'd prepared her for the night and the other girl had gone, wearing only her *camisa de noche*, starry-eyed at the beauty and the wonder of it all, she'd turned out all of the lights and had knelt in front of the single candle illuminating the *crucifijo*.

And kneeling in front of the Holy Image, she'd prayed to the Holy Mother to let her husband find her body pleasing to his eyes, and to help her to be a good wife, and to let

their union be blessed with as many little ones as Dios might see fit to bestow upon their home.

"May this yoke I am taking upon myself," she'd repeated the beautiful words of the Nuptial Mass and Blessing, "be one of love and peace." After that she'd pressed her lips to the wedding ring both she and Rodolfo had kissed before the altar of God as she'd prayed, "Grant us, oh Lord, that loving You we may love one another and live in accordance with Your holy law."

Then after making the precious sign of her faith, she'd gotten to her feet and pulled her shift over her head and had climbed up on the big bed and had lain there feeling very nude and vulnerable and terribly alone.

But not for long. Seconds later Rodolfo had knocked on the door of *their* room and had inquired almost timidly:

"May I come in now, *querida mía*?"

"Please do, my beloved," she'd called back.

And Dios had answered her prayers. He'd sent them two fine boys and three very beautiful girls. The girls the Blessed Virgin be praised, were all happily married and living in Miami with children of their own.

Most of the glow in her face faded. Her fan was still as she made the sign of the cross. But because it had been His will, one of their boys had left them before he'd reached his twelfth year, and they had lost Vincente at the Bay of Pigs.

Doña Maria resumed fanning her husband's face. Now, at least the last time they'd heard from their friends in the *subterráneo*, a Russian missile *técnico* who liked his bed partners young was living at the *hacienda* with one of Luisa's granddaughters, probably sleeping in and making love with her in her and Rodolfo's bed.

Even more *difícil* for her to realize was the fact that Rodolfo, bereft of his personal fortune, stripped of everything but his pride, was now the last of his line. And, as with the *nino* Moses, their personal ark of indignity, well-daubed with pitch and slime, had carried them to be strangers in a very strange land.

Doña Maria got to her feet to go see how her chicken was doing and stood, tensed, as one of the doors in the hall opened and a young woman screamed:

"Oh, no. Not again. Please let me go. Oh, dear God, please someone help me."

The plea was cut short by what sounded like a blow. The door that had opened slammed shut.

Doña Maria hurried to her own door and opened it and looked out. If any of the other tenants had heard the scream and the appeal for help, none of the other hall doors had opened. The silence in the hall was as deep and complete as it had been a few moments before.

She debated awakening Rodolfo. But if she did, what could she tell him? She walked to the rail and looked out and down. The scream hadn't come from their side of the building. She was fairly certain of that. But to the best of her knowledge neither the little *señorita* in 303 or the three señoritas in 301 were home. And all of the other apartments on that side of the hall, except for 101, were occupied by married couples.

She returned to her own doorway and stood looking at the closed doors across the hall. What she had heard could have been the last of a family quarrel, perhaps between Señor Adamowski and his wife. It could have been part of a scene on a television program that had, accidentally, been turned up too loud.

Doña Maria closed her door and continued on to the kitchen. Or, and that didn't seem likely without her hi-fi blaring, the teenager in 303 could be home entertaining a boy friend and they had quarreled, briefly. In which event there was even less need for her to be concerned or interrupt Rodolfo's nap. Ay Dios, after what she and Rodolfo had witnessed in the parking area when they had returned home from a late *cinematógrafo* only a few evenings before, there was little that could happen to the blonde child in 303 that she hadn't experienced before.

Right out in the open, on the back seat of the boy's car, like a dog and a bitch in heat. Or a drunken cane cutter and his *negra enamorada* celebrating Día de Año Nuevo under the most convenient bush, totally oblivious of who might be watching them.

Doña Maria washed the bad taste from her mouth with a glass of cooking sherry. She had no quarrel with sex. She liked it. Even now she was forty-three she still welcomed

Rodolfo's attentions. But there was a time and a place for everything.

It all went to prove something, she supposed. Possibly that, no matter what the bearded barbarian currently ruling her homeland might say, there was an upper and a lower class, with the divisions sharply defined. And no matter how pretty the Jones girl might be, or however sincere Señor Jones might be in his at least oral dedication to Jesus Cristo, they both were of the people.

It was, Doña Maria decided as she poured herself another glass of wine, all a part of the modern trend, part of the new Great Society, the worldwide resurgence of the unbathed masses to which she didn't and to which she never would subscribe.

That for the people. Even if it had cost the woman her head, she agreed with Marie Antoinette. If the poor couldn't afford *garbanzo* soup, let them eat *arroz con pollo*. She would be quite content if she could learn how to cook it.

She finished her wine, then stood for a long moment looking out through the kitchen window at the late-afternoon sky before lifting the cover from the pot containing the unsavory-smelling concoction simmering on the stove.

As long as she had her faith and her Church and Rodolfo, she could bear the loss of their money. She would survive the confiscation of their beautiful *hacienda*. She could put up with the rather unpleasant knowledge that a Russian missile *técnico* was copulating with the granddaughter of her former personal maid in what had been her and Rodolfo's marital bed. She could even stand the thought of having to live out the remaining years of her life among Norteamericano *extranjeros* who thought she was slightly *estúpide*.

But please, Dios, be reasonable. If it wasn't too much to ask, don't let there be any *guitarra*-strumming folk singers, or any teenage girl children addicted to rock and roll, or public fornication in whatever new building into which she and Rodolfo moved.

CHAPTER 13

The term "police" designates that executive civil force of a state to which is entrusted the duty of maintaining public order and of enforcing regulations for the prevention and detection of crime. In a perfect system of civil administration the function of the police should be to curb the liberty of the subject only when it degenerates into license—and any material variation from the standard is to be deprecated as being arbitrary and tyrannical. . . .

ENCYCLOPAEDIA

The call from 196 East Westmore came into the East Chicago Avenue precinct station while Hanson, Ginnis, Meyers, and Brotz, having signed out a few minutes before, were washing up in the lavatory adjoining the squad room.

Hanson, Ginnis, and Meyers were glad to call it a day. But, even after having worked a double tour of duty, Brotz was reluctant to go home. He always was on holidays. As he ran water on his hands and splashed a few drops on his face he reflected, rather grimly, that, as far as he was concerned, washing up was a waste of time.

He might have been maimed or killed during his double tour of duty, but he hadn't done anything to get dirty. Any one of his half-assed in-laws could have told anyone interested that cops never worked that hard.

Outside of driving around in a nice big squad car, playing pigeon for a lunatic fringe of moronic Sunday drivers, seemingly intent on killing themselves and everyone else on the street, all he had done to earn his pay had been to:

Help wrestle a dozen assorted drunks and beatniks and hopheads into paddy wagons, hold a gun on two parole violators who'd attempted to hold up a filling station, make a half dozen investigations, help settle three domestic quar-

rels, track down five lost children, help break up an incipient riot at Oak Street Beach, be cursed at several dozen times, help the other boys talk the loaded revolver away from the hysterical and badly wounded little junkie in the love pad not far from the Drake, apply first aid to both her and the man she had shot until the ambulance boys had arrived to take over, and do such other sundry little civic housekeeping tasks which the radio dispatcher had assigned them.

All of it strictly routine. All of it part of a normal day. All of it normal police brutality.

As he dried his hands and face on a paper towel, then dropped it into the metal waste container, Brotz thought glumly that it was the same every holiday.

He couldn't love Adele more if she were Elizabeth Taylor, Sandra Dee, and Jane Fonda all rolled into one pleasantly plump forty-six-year-old hausfrau. It was her relatives he couldn't stand. No matter what was being celebrated, from the Fourth of July to Christmas, every one of his loud-mouthed in-laws who'd never had, and couldn't hold, a decent job, but who could walk, or crawl, or bend an elbow, always used the happy occasion as an excuse to put his feet under his table and drink up his liquor supply. This while for the past twenty-five years they'd spent most of their time telling Adele how stupid she'd been to marry a cop.

Right now, his living room was probably filled with wall-to-wall in-laws waiting for him to come home so they could tell him all of the wonderful plans they'd made for his retirement years.

He knew what he was going to do. When his retirement became effective, he was going to sell his two-room flat and move to St. Petersburg, Florida, and buy a small house on the beach. Just big enough to hold himself and Adele. He was also going to buy a fourteen-foot fiberglass boat and a fifteen-horsepower outboard motor and two deep-sea rods and two reels, and a big tackle box filled with tackle, including a razor-sharp fish knife. And every day the sun shone he was going to have Adele pack a nice lunch, just for two. And he and Adele were going to get into the boat and go out on the water, the two of them together, alone, and they were going to sit in the sun and fish and talk, like they'd never been able to do in all of their married life. And if any of his in-laws attempted to horn in on them, he was going

to use the razor-sharp fish knife to cut them up into little pieces, then use the little pieces as chum.

"What are you looking so happy about, Herman?" Meyers asked him. "Thinking of the big day, eh?"

"That could be," Brotz admitted.

Ginnis paused in combing his hair. "Say, did I tell you guys what happened at the breakfast table the other morning?"

"If it concerns your kid, probably," Hanson said. "So let's hold it until tomorrow, huh? Besides, we're still working on Gitche Gumees."

Meyers slipped into his suit coat. "Shining Big-Sea-Water. Hah. Did you ever take a good look at one of our beaches after a half million slobes have finished bobbing up and down in the water and using it for a bathroom? I wouldn't go into that stuff without a deep-sea diver's outfit. And I would hesitate even then."

Ginnis took the ribbing good-naturedly. "Jealous, that's all you guys are. On account of I got such a smart kid."

"That could be," Hanson admitted. "My old man had six of us by the time he was as old as I am. But then he had plenty of time for his homework. He wasn't holding down a full-time job and trying to get a law degree via the night-school route."

"You ever think of getting married, Ejler?" Meyers asked.

"Who doesn't?" Hanson said. "In fact a couple of months ago, Frenchy LaTour introduced me to a black-haired Irish schoolteacher who—" He stopped talking as the station watch commander walked into the washroom carrying a flimsy in one hand. "Now what?"

The watch commander was apologetic. "Look, fellows. I'm sorry to have to do this to you. I know you've already put in a ten-hour day. But—"

"Okay," Hanson said. "So you're sorry. Let's have it."

Captain Healy handed him the flimsy. "Well, I no sooner sent the last new shift team out on a squeal and this came in and I haven't anyone to cover it. And the desk man says that the dame who called in sounded pretty frantic."

"Don't they all?" Ginnis said.

Hanson read the call-in aloud. "'Mrs. Lamar Mason of Apartment 101 at 196 East Westmore reports that four or more minor males, believed to be drunk and under the influ-

ence of narcotics, are holding a young woman tenant prisoner in one of the apartments and are presumably forcing her to have sexual relations with them. Said female has called for help and, while four of the men living in the building are attempting to gain entrance to the apartment, Mrs. Mason requests police assistance.' ”

Meyers said, “196 East Westmore? That’s the building Frenchy lives in. The one that’s going to be torn down.”

Hanson slipped into his coat. “It is at that. Okay, fellows. Golden time. Let’s go.”

“Hah,” Ginnis scoffed. “Golden time. That will be the day. Let’s face it, fellows. Be honest. Being a cop is a hell of a way of making a living.”

Pleased by even a brief reprieve before he had to face his garrulous, freeloading in-laws, Brotz was the first man out the door.

“Oh, I don’t know,” he said.

The long Memorial Day Sunday afternoon had been as pleasant, and possibly as fruitful, as any afternoon that Mike Adamowski had ever experienced.

Althea had slept in his arms for almost an hour. Then when she had awakened she’d been all soft and warm and dewy-eyed and still of the opinion it was time they concerned themselves less with the problems confronting society in general and began to build for their own future. God knew he’d done his best.

Now, at 5:53 P.M., with his male ego purring like a contented tomcat as he stirred a pitcher of extra-dry martinis, he decided there’d only been one flaw in the day.

Normally when the blonde girl child who lived in the apartment above theirs was home, she had either her hi-fi or her television set, or both, turned up so loud that he and Althea couldn’t hear themselves think. But, proving there was always something new, while they’d heard both her front and her back door open and close a number of times and thought she obviously was throwing one of her not infrequent parties, this afternoon the party wasn’t in stereo.

Not that there hadn’t been other assorted noises. For the past hour and a half, possibly longer, he and Althea had been treated to an almost constant thumping and gurgling in the ancient pipes embedded in the walls as the teenager

and her guests ran water in the kitchen sink and bathroom wash bowl or flushed the antiquated toilet.

This in addition to opening and slamming the refrigerator door, numerous indistinguishable whispered consultations, plus what had sounded at times like a herd of frolicking young elephants playing touch football.

Althea came into the living room holding the neck of her cocktail dress together with one hand. "Zip me up, will you, sweetheart?"

"Reluctantly," the lawyer said.

"Hah," Althea scoffed. "Listen to the man." She held up her face to be kissed. "It was all very beautiful, darling. And thank you very much, kind sir. But once more right now would be—"

She left what she'd been about to say hanging in midair as the front door of the apartment above theirs opened and, her voice muffled by their own closed door and ceiling, a girl pleaded, "*Oh, no! Not again! Please let me go. Oh, dear God, please someone help me!*"

The plea for assistance was cut short by what sounded like a blow. The door that had opened slammed shut.

Adamowski deliberately finished zippering his wife's dress. "Probably some game they're playing."

Althea avoided meeting his eyes. "Probably."

Adamowski set two glasses on the bar and started to fill them from the pitcher, then set the pitcher back on the wood. "God damn it to hell," he swore softly. "We both know better than that. But why do these things always have to happen to us? Why do we always have to be the ones to stick out our necks?"

No longer avoiding his eyes, Althea said, "Because that's the way we are, I guess. Some people care. Some don't. Why don't you open the door and look out and see how many of the other tenants are rushing up there to find out what's going on?"

"I don't have to," Adamowski said. "On the other hand, everyone in the building knows that the kid upstairs is a hot-pantsed little tramp. Sooner or later, something like this was bound to happen."

"Even so," Althea said.

"Even so," Adamowski agreed with her. He drank the martini he'd poured. "Well, here we go again. But they

should have named me George instead of what they did. After all, it wasn't St. Michael who went around killing dragons."

Althea stood on her tiptoes and kissed him. "My St. Michael does."

Adamowski returned her kiss, then opened their front door. On the far side of the hall the Garcia's door was just closing, but if any of the other tenants in the building had heard the appeal for help, none of them was sprinting for the spiral stairs, although Mr. Rogers in 202 was standing in his open doorway, looking up at the floor above.

The man obviously had just stepped out of his shower. His hair and his bare torso were still dripping water. His only garment was the bath towel he'd wrapped around his ample middle.

"What gives?" the literary agent asked.

"I haven't any idea," Adamowski admitted as he started up the stairs to the third floor. "But there's something very odd going on up there and has been for the last hour and a half."

"I'll get a pair of pants and be right with you," Rogers said.

A modicum of faith in his fellowman restored, Adamowski climbed the spiral stairs to the third floor and strode down the long balcony and rapped smartly on the closed door of Apartment 303.

"You in there. Open up. I want to talk to Terry."

No one acknowledged his request, but on the far side of the door two or more youthful males, it was difficult to determine the number, seemed to be holding a heated consultation.

Adamowski knocked again, more sharply the second time. "I asked you to open this door. Now come on. Let's get it open or I'll have to phone for the police."

There was another brief consultation and a few seconds later the door opened the width of the night chain and a long-haired, flushed-faced youth whose breath reeked of cheap whiskey peered out with alcohol induced smugness.

"Yeah?" Solly asked. "What can we do for you, mister?"

Adamowski told him. "You can tell me what's going on in there."

"We're just having a little party."

"Then why did Terry scream for help?"

A second youth, equally long-haired and equally intoxicated, peered over the first youth's shoulder. "What screaming is this, mister?" Joe Joe asked. "I didn't hear no screaming. Did you hear any screaming, Solly?"

"No," Solly said. "I didn' hear no screaming." He wiped his slack lips with the back of his hand. "If you heard any screaming, mister, it must have come from one of the other apartments. Like I tol' you before, all we're doing in here is having a little party."

"Now look, punk," Adamowski said. "What you and Terry's other guests may be doing is your and Terry's business. Frankly, I couldn't care less who's doing what to whom. And as soon as Terry comes to the door and tells me that everything is all right in there, I'll go away and leave you alone."

Joe Joe asked, "Who shall I say wants to see her?"

"Tell her it's Mr. Adamowski."

"Okay," Joe Joe said. "I'll tell her."

From where he was standing, Adamowski could see the closed door of the bedroom that corresponded to his and Althea's. The boy who had offered to inform Terry that he wanted to see her disappeared into the room and closed the door behind him. While he waited for him and Terry to reappear, Adamowski studied as much as he could see of the living room through the relatively narrow slit.

The long coffee table in front of the brocaded sofa was littered with the remnants of partially eaten sandwiches and empty beer cans. There were more beer cans and more crusts on the carpet. A partially filled bottle of whiskey was standing on an end table beside a large ashtray so filled with cigarette butts they were overflowing onto the wood. One of the stand lamps was lying on its side probably overturned during the touch-football game that he and Althea had heard.

Rogers, wearing slacks and a sports shirt now, climbed the spiral stairs and hurried down the balcony to where Adamowski was standing. "What gives?"

"I don't know yet," the lawyer said. "One of the boys has gone to get Terry."

His attention attracted by motion, he looked into the mirror on the wall over the sofa and saw the reflection of a

third youth, equally long-haired and flushed-faced, standing in front of the hi-fi component on the far side of the room, twisting and contorting his body in an almost narcissistic trance as he danced with an imaginary partner to the strains of music that only he could hear.

The bedroom door opened and closed. The youth who had gone to get Terry returned and peered out through the slit formed by the extended night chain.

"Terry says she can't see you right now."

"Why not?"

"Because she's busy," the youth leered.

Adamowski studied the boys' faces, paying particular attention to their eyes. The three boys he could see were high on more than whiskey and beer, so high he doubted if any of them were fully cognizant of what he was saying or doing.

"I'm afraid I can't accept that," Adamowski said.

Joe Joe took his switchblade from the pocket of his wrinkled slacks and made a point of cleaning his nails with the tip of a five-inch blade. "That's up to you, mister," he said thickly. "Now why don't you stop bugging us and go away?"

Adamowski continued to stand with one of his hands resting on the partially opened door. It wouldn't take any great amount of strength to rip the night chain out of its anchorage. He imagined, between them, he and Rogers could handle the youths they'd seen.

There were, however, several bad features about their attempting to force their way into the apartment. They had no way of knowing how many other youths might be behind the closed bedroom door, or in the other bedroom, or in the kitchen. Then, too, they had no legal right to force their way into the apartment without the resident owner's permission. And, in instances of this sort, involving adults and juveniles, there'd been several recent adverse rulings in which the would-be good Samaritans had been found guilty of assault while the juveniles had gone free. During the past few years the entire premise of the law had changed. Instead of being used to protect society, it upheld the right of the individual to do just about anything he or she chose to do.

"What do we do now?" Rogers asked.

"I don't know," Adamowski said.

As he was speaking, the youth who had opened the door closed and locked it.

Adamowski raised his hand to knock again. The door directly across the hall opened and Jack Stafford called, "What's going on over there?"

"Your guess is as good as ours," Rogers said. "You and Mrs. Stafford must have heard the same thing we did."

"Well, yes. As a matter of fact," Stafford admitted, "we did hear, or thought we heard, a scream and an appeal for help. But—"

"I know," Adamowski said. "You didn't want to become involved."

He walked down the balcony with Rogers, and Althea met them on the second-floor landing. "What did you find out, Mike?"

"Not much," Adamowski admitted. "Just that there are three or four, or more, boys in the apartment and Terry seems to be shall we say 'entertaining' one of them. Willingly or not, we don't know."

"Didn't you talk to Terry?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"They wouldn't let us see her."

"What are you going to do?"

"Call the police," the lawyer said as he continued down the stairs to the first-floor foyer. "The boys we did see are so high on whiskey and goof balls they are 'way out in space." He added, "And while it's just a snap judgment, I'd say that our little neighbor has allowed herself to be picked up by a group of young hoodlums and what started out as a run-of-the-mill party has turned into a lineup."

"That's the way it looks to me," Rogers said.

Althea had to hurry to keep up with her husband. "But where are we going now, Mike?"

"To talk to Mrs. Mason," Adamowski said. "If possible, I'd like to know how many boys are in there and if they are there at Terry's invitation before we phone the police. And Mrs. Mason makes an excellent concierge."

"No," Lou Mason said in response to the lawyer's question. "I didn't see either Terry or her friends come in. In fact I haven't seen Terry since this morning. And the only boy I've seen is the one who brought back her things and

told me that Terry had asked him to stop by and put them in her apartment."

"What sort of things?"

"A blanket and a beach bag."

"What did he look like?" Rogers asked.

"He was an odd-looking boy," Lou said. "The way-out type. A wrinkled blue blazer with brass buttons, but no shirt. Bare feet. A John the Baptist haircut. Oh, yes. And a few scraggly hairs on his chin."

"We didn't see him," Adamowski said. "He was probably the boy in the bedroom with Terry." He puzzled, "But if Terry wasn't home when he got here, and he didn't come in with her, how did he get into the apartment?"

"He told me Terry gave him her key. He even showed me her key container."

"And he just walked up and waited for her?"

Lou shook her head. "No. The boy I saw came down again in not more than two or three minutes. I heard him whistling as he came down the stairs, then saw him walk past my front window."

"In what direction?" Althea asked.

"West."

"Of course," Althea said. "Remember, Mike? The four boys I saw drive in, then drive right out again? They were probably looking for Terry's car. And when they didn't see it, the boy who had the key used it to get into her apartment, opened the back door for the other three, then walked down the front stairs and down the drive and up the service stairs. And when Terry did come home she also went up the back way and found all four of them laying for her."

"That could well be," Rogers said.

Althea made a grimace of distaste. "And if that's the case, they've probably been abusing her all afternoon. Ever since we first started hearing those noises."

Adamowski protested, "But if that is the situation, living right next door as she does, with only a thin wall between the two apartments, why didn't Miss Daly hear what was going on and phone for the police? As I understand it, she keeps a rather close watch on the child." He added thoughtfully, "For that matter, now I think of it, why didn't Miss Daly hear Terry scream? Why wasn't she pounding on that door before we were?"

Rogers said, "I can answer that one. I don't think she's home. I talked to Miss Ames in the parking area Friday morning and she said they were spending the weekend at the Dunes."

"The other two teachers, perhaps," Lou said. "But not Miss Daly."

"How do you know?" Adamowski asked.

Lou told him. "Because I saw Miss Daly when she left for Mass this morning. I saw her when she returned. And, to the best of my knowledge, she's still in the building."

CHAPTER 14

It was 5:53 P.M. when Lou Mason called the precinct station and precisely 6:01 P.M., eight minutes later, when, its wailing siren clearing a way through the holiday traffic, the squad car commanded by Lieutenant Ejler Hanson braked in front of the building.

In those eight minutes a number of things happened.

Later, after all four of the boys had been taken into custody, because all of them were juveniles and because of the possible legal repercussions, there was considerable confusion in the press and over the air as to which of the four adult male tenants involved had first suggested they break down the door of the blonde teenager's apartment and do what they could to rectify and clarify the situation without waiting for the police to arrive.

Because of his carnival background and minor police record, plus the fact it was he who had shot Frankie the Beard and his insistence he would do it again under similar circumstances, Frenchy LaTour was attributed with the decision by a number of reporters and a newscaster. This in spite of the fact that, fresh from viewing the Memorial Day parade and faintly redolent of cheap bourbon, the old carnival man hadn't arrived on the scene until after his three fellow tenants had started up the stairs.

An equal number of reporters and radio and television newscasters assumed it had been Señor Garcia, presumably because at one time he had been active in the Cuban underground and had been trained to take direct action. Still others credited Leo Rogers and Mike Adamowski, the first because of his Army service in Korea and the fact he had braved the switchblade in the hand of one of the punks to save a policeman's life, the attorney because of his known

participation in various forlorn causes and mass demonstrations not strictly within the letter of the law.

In reality, the decision was mutual and spontaneous, although it was Adamowski who first put the thought into words. That came shortly after Lou Mason's pronouncement that she hadn't seen Miss Daly leave the building since she'd returned from Mass that morning.

In the deep, brief silence that followed, the door of the Garcia apartment opened and while Señora Garcia remained in the open doorway, Señor Garcia hurriedly descended the spiral stairs and joined his fellow tenants gathered in the foyer.

The onetime wealthy Cuban plantation owner was profusely apologetic. "Your pardon, *señors, señoras*," he apologized as he joined them. "But I have just awakened from a short nap and instead of wakening me immediately, my *señora* has just informed me tardily that she heard a plea for assistance coming from the Señorita Jones' apartment. This is correct? It is this you are discussing?"

"That's right," Rogers said.

"The pretty little *señorita* is in difficulty?"

"We don't know," Adamowski admitted. "Right now, for one, I'm not quite certain who is in the apartment or who screamed for help."

Rogers looked up at the third-floor balcony but made no comment.

Adamowski continued, "However we do know two things: someone is in trouble; we aren't getting anywhere standing here."

"*Sí*," Señor Garcia agreed.

"I'll buy that," Rogers said.

Adamowski looked at Lou. "Please call the police, Mrs. Mason. Inform them we think that four or more minor males, at least three of them intoxicated and under the influence of narcotics, are holding one of the female tenants prisoner and, presumably, are forcing her to have relations with them."

"Right," Lou said.

As she disappeared into her apartment, the lawyer added, "Meanwhile let's go back up and knock on the door again. And if the punks won't open it, we'll break it down."

"Sí, señor," Garcia said.

Closely followed by Garcia and Rogers, Adamowski started back up the spiral stairs and turned and looked over his shoulder as the front door of the building opened and Frenchy LaTour came in.

"Well, what do you know?" the old carnival man quipped in his husky whisper. "One last gathering of the clan before we all fold our tents like the Arabs. But why the long faces? Don't tell me we're being evicted a month early and have to move out in the morning to make room for progress?"

"No," Althea Adamowski said. "We have trouble."

"What kind of trouble?"

Althea explained. "Well, a few minutes ago we heard a girl scream for help. And since then we've found out that there are three or four boys in Terry's apartment, boys whom we believe haven't any right to be there. And we're afraid they're, well, giving her a bad time."

The smile left LaTour's face. The deep lines in it firmed. "Oh," he whispered soberly. "I was afraid something like this might happen. I saw the way the child was dressed when she drove out this morning. And while running a mitt camp is one of the few things I haven't done, I didn't have to look in a crystal ball to know she could be headed for trouble."

"Mitt camp?" Señor Garcia puzzled.

Rogers explained. "It's a slang term for the fortune-telling concession on a carnival midway."

"Gracias."

LaTour asked, "How do you know how many boys there are?"

"We just came from there," Adamowski said. "And while they opened the door far enough for us to see the mess they've made of the living room and ascertain that the three boys we did see were drunk and obviously high on goof balls, and that at least one of them had a switchblade, the door of the bedroom was closed and they wouldn't let us talk to Terry. They claimed that she was 'busy.' So it stands to reason there was at least one more boy in the bedroom."

"In other words, a lineup."

"In other words."

LaTour was practical. "Then why are we standing here?" He followed the other men up the stairs. "But if the punks

you saw were hopped up and at least one of them had a shiv, I think I'd better stop off at my place and pick up my son's service pistol. I've gone up against junkies before. And you never can tell what a hophead may do."

"All right," Adamowski agreed. "That might be a good idea. Maybe a gun will impress them. But for God's sake don't use it unless you have to. The three we saw were juveniles."

Garcia puzzled, "What difference does that make?"

"In this country a lot of difference," Adamowski said grimly.

As they reached the third floor and paused to allow La-Tour to enter his daughter-in-law's apartment and get his dead son's pistol, either out of drunken bravado or because in their muddled minds they no longer felt any need for secrecy, one of the youths behind the closed door of Apartment 303 turned on the stereo player to its highest decibel level and a raucous blare of music filled the hall.

Jack Stafford opened his door a second time and looked first at the closed door of 303, then at his fellow tenants as, rejoined now by LaTour carrying a .45-caliber pistol in one hand, they started down the far side of the hall.

"Look," he called rather plaintively. "Someone clue me in. What's going on?"

"We'll know in a minute," Adamowski called back.

The bearded folk singer hesitated, then started down his side of the octagonal hall as if to join them and stopped as his rather plain-faced wife, wearing a shapeless wrapper, came out of their apartment and spoke earnestly to him, her voice inaudible to the others because of the volume of the music.

When they reached it, Adamowski knocked sharply on the door of Apartment 303 and called, "All right. The party's over. Turn off that music and open this door."

A burst of youthful male laughter almost as raucous as the record on the turntable answered him and one of the boys on the far side of the locked door called, "Hey. You hear that, fellows. The party's over."

Solly was equally amused. "Who says?"

"Probably," Joe Joe said, "one of those same two squares who were up here a few minutes ago."

"Maybe he wants a little," Harry offered.

The lewd remark sent all three of the boys into a paroxysm of drunken laughter.

"Maybe he wants a little," Solly repeated.

LaTour listened with a critical ear. "'Bennies' mixed with booze, I'd say. That's a bad combination."

Adamowski examined the door. During the months he and Althea had lived in the building, he'd never fully realized how solidly it was built. The plumbing might be antiquated, the water pipes might gurgle, but the doors were seasoned, solid oak.

"What do you think?" he asked the others.

"I don't think we can bust it down," LaTour said. "Anyway not without an ax or a crowbar." He slipped the slide on the pistol he was carrying and pumped a shell into the firing chamber. "Why don't I shoot off the lock?"

Adamowski shook his head. "No. You might hit one of them. And we don't really know what's going on in there. Terry could have invited them."

Rogers motioned the other men away from the door. "I have a little more bulk than the rest of you. Let me hit it a couple of times. I doubt if I can split the wood, but maybe I can spring the lock out of the jamb."

He backed up against the rail to get as much impetus as he could, then lunged against the door with his shoulder and was rewarded by the sound of splintering wood in the general area of the heavy spring lock.

"Nice going," LaTour said huskily. "You've started it. A couple more times should do it."

The literary agent lunged against the door a second time, then a third time and his third try was rewarded by the lock springing free of the splintered inner jamb, the force of the impact ripping the night chain out of its socket, banging the door back against the living-room wall and almost impelling Rogers into the room.

Adamowski caught at and steadied him until he regained his balance. "Nice going, fellow."

"My pleasure," Rogers panted.

The record on the turntable continued to blare. The stench of cheap whiskey and vomit and unwashed adolescent male flesh was almost overpowering. The three long-haired youths in the room, all of them barefooted and bare-chested, seemingly stunned by the sudden intrusion of four adult

males on what they had come to believe was their own private preserve, reacted according to their degree of intoxication and the number of benzedrine tablets they'd taken.

Backed up against the expensive hi-fi cabinet, Harry stood with his mouth open and his face screwed up as if he was trying to cry, but couldn't. "I tol' you guys," he whimpered. "I tol' you we couldn't get away with this. I tol' Frankie when we first bust in I didn' want to go back to St. Charles. Besides, I think I'm going to be sick again."

Solly was belligerent. "You got no right," he blustered as he glowered back at the four men looking at him. "You got no right to bust in here and interfere with a private party. None of you guys are cops. All you do is live in the building."

Joe Joe, the largest and most intoxicated of the three youths in the disordered living room, was also the least concerned by the breaking down of the door. "Aw, frig 'em," he smirked as he swaggered across the room and sat on the arm of the sofa and gulped the last of the whiskey in the bottle on the debris-littered coffee table. "So we pronged the broad a few times? What can the cops do to us?" He wiped his slack lips with the back of his hand. "Like Frankie said when we planned the caper. We're just little boys. We're juveniles."

"Which one of you is Frankie?" Adamowski asked.

"None of us," Joe Joe sniggered. The thought seemed to amuse him. "He's still in there banging the babe. He don't even know the party is over."

There was a torn silk shantung wrapper, obviously feminine, lying in front of the coffee table. LaTour picked it up with his free hand. Then, looking at the closed bedroom door, he whispered huskily, "One of you turn off that music and keep your eyes on these three punks. I'll take care of the little crud in there. Terry may be a little less embarrassed that way. After all, I'm old enough to be her grandfather."

CHAPTER 15

RAPE, in law, the crime of having carnal knowledge of a woman by a man, not her husband, forcibly and unlawfully, against her will. . . . The law regards as immaterial whether the woman is chaste, or unchaste, married or single, provided the offence had been committed forcibly and without her consent. . . .

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT ACT

As Mary Daly watched, night first curtained then blacked out the window of the bedroom into which she had been moved. The deepening night seemed to make the reflection of the work light the police surgeon was using even more glaring than it was. During the late afternoon the wind had veered to the west and, mixed with the reek of antiseptic in the room, she could smell, or imagined she could smell, the freshness of new, green, growing things taking shape in the rich black womb of the prairie.

She hoped it wasn't prophetic.

Heavily sedated as she was, hysteria wasn't far away. She was torn between twin desires to scream out in protest, and bury her head in the pillow on which she was lying and weep. The past few hours were still so real, so vivid, so completely unfair. In a futile attempt to keep from thinking about what had happened, what was happening to her, she tried to identify the night noises she could hear.

In the parking area under the open window and in the street in front of the building, there was an almost constant arrival and departure of what she presumed were police and press cars. The interior of the building was as busy. There was a continuous clomp of male feet ascending and descending the metal risers of the spiral stairs. Still closer by, in the living room of the Jones' apartment, plainclothes

detectives and uniformed officers and reporters were asking and answering questions, taking pictures, filling out reports.

It was, in a sense, the black-haired teacher thought, ironic. After twenty-six years of almost total anonymity, of being a face in the crowd, she was suddenly the object of intense police activity, and the subject of tomorrow morning's headlines. Not because of any particular accomplishment or proficiency in anything she'd studied. Merely because she'd been born female.

When he finished with what he was doing, the police surgeon turned out the work light and drew down the folded-back sheet. "You're going to be fine, Miss Daly. Just fine," he assured her.

Mary continued to lie with her face averted from his. "What happens now?"

The man rolled the instruments he'd been using into the no longer sterile surgical pack. "To begin with, I'll want to hospitalize you for a few days."

"Why?"

"I want to have some X rays taken and make some further tests, including a Friedman and possibly an Aschheim-Zondek to determine what that situation is. We'll also want some clinical pictures." The police surgeon explained. "The State Attorney's office and the officers handling the case will need them when they go before the grand jury."

"I see," Mary said.

When the man had gone into the other room, she sat up at the police matron's request and allowed the woman to slip the nightdress she'd gotten from her own apartment over her head, then lay back again with the top sheet pulled up to her chin, vaguely fearful the bed on which she was lying might erupt into motion any moment, still feeling very nude and vulnerable and very alone in this new world into which she'd been introduced.

Sensing the hysteria building in her, the police matron said, "Easy makes it, Miss Daly. It's all over now. Let's try not to think about it."

Using, Mary thought grimly, a contraction of the plural pronoun "us," the accusative and dative of "we." As if she'd been in the other bedroom. As if she had spent two hours in mental and physical torment, lying nude with *her* mouth taped shut so she couldn't scream, with two young animals

holding *her* wrists and ankles and a third pressing a knife to *her* throat while a fourth slaving teenager attempted to make *her* a party to the forced violation of *her* body.

Besides, this thing wasn't over. It was just beginning. She was going to have to live with it for the rest of her life.

Her lips compressed, staring out at the enormity of the night beyond the window, she lay listening to the conversation in the other room, hearing herself being discussed as if she were already a clinical record, a page in the medical report that would be part of the State of Illinois' case against the three youths who had raped her. Mary made a mental correction. Four if Frankie lived.

"In most instances of this kind," the police surgeon who had treated her was reporting, presumably to Lieutenant Hanson, "there is usually some area of doubt which a smart defense can expand. But I'd say that you boys and the State Attorney's office have a *prima facie* case here. Miss Daly was definitely *virgo intacto* prior to the assault. And those boys really gave her a rough time. I not only found physical evidence of rupture of an intact hymen and abrasions in and forced distention of the vaginal canal, I had to suture various minor lacerations in the area. For God's sake how long did they work on her?"

"From what the other tenants tell us, we figure about two hours," Lieutenant Hanson said. "And you'll get me some pictures, Doctor?"

"As soon as we get her to the hospital."

Mary continued to stare out the window at the night. Embittered by her own mother's moral laxness, and because she had tried to be a good Catholic and live up to the precepts of her church, she'd kept the more intimate parts of her body as inviolate as those of a Carmelite nun. Now the police were going to take pictures of them. Who knew? She might wind up on the fold-out page of *Playboy* as the best-laid high-school teacher of the month. Or, if sufficient prints were made from the negatives, they could be hawked to her students in the halls and admired and leered at between classes. She could almost hear one of her male students explaining:

"Boy, get a load of this will you? And from the way Miss Daly acted around here, you wouldn't even know she had one."

She wiped her eyes with a corner of the sheet as she thought back to what she'd thought that morning while she'd been taking her shower. In a way, at least in part, this was Lieutenant Hanson's fault. They didn't have to be just a man and a woman who'd met on a spiral staircase. Lieutenant Hanson had liked her as much as she'd liked him. A woman could tell those things. She'd felt his eyes following her all the way up the stairs. But had Hanson as much as phoned and asked her for a date so they could become better acquainted? No. If he had, everything might have been so different. It could be she'd never have gotten into this mess. She'd probably have been too concerned with her own emotions to try to play mother hen to Terry.

Now she had been raped repeatedly and Mr. Rogers might die and nice old Mr. LaTour was in serious trouble. Because they had come to her assistance.

She rolled her head from side to side on the pillow. If she lived to be one hundred years old she wouldn't ever forget her embarrassment when Mr. LaTour had walked into the bedroom and found Frankie doing what he'd been doing to her. Nor, after the police had arrived, would she ever forget the old carnival man's throaty answer to Lieutenant Hanson's question.

"No," the old man had told the lieutenant. "I know what you're trying to do, Ejler. You're trying to make sure I'm in the clear. But I wasn't shooting *at* the little son of a bitch to try to keep him from escaping. When I walked into the bedroom expecting to find a punk putting the blocks to Terry and found him banging on Miss Daly, I just blew my stack. It was like, well, like there was nothing clean or decent left in the world anymore. So when the punk saw me standing there with a gun in my hand and made a break for the bathroom, still randy, but whimpering with fear, I shot him. I tried to splatter the little bastard's guts all over the bathroom tile.

The girl on the bed forced herself back to the present. Now, out in the other room, Lieutenant Hanson was asking, "Is it all right if I talk to her?"

"If you don't talk too long," the police surgeon said. "But I warn you, she's under heavy sedation and the ambulance I've sent for should be here any minute."

"All I want is a few pertinent facts for the preliminary report."

"That shouldn't take very long."

Mary sat up in the bed and asked the police matron to hand her her purse and used her compact and her lipstick to make herself at least reasonably presentable. Then, after fluffing the pillow against the head of the bed, she leaned back and studied her face in the small mirror in the compact.

As horrible as the experience had been, what had happened to her didn't show, at least not in her face. Outside of a few minor bruises and the beginning of a black eye from the time that Frankie had punched her in his almost psychopathic determination to make her respond to him, on the surface at least she looked much the same as she had when she'd returned from Mass and from checking the machine-gun bullet scars on the granite facade of Holy Name Cathedral.

Lieutenant Hanson entered the room without knocking and came directly to the bed and sat in the chair that the police matron had vacated. "My name is Hanson, Lieutenant Hanson, Miss Daly," he said. "You may or may not remember me. But we've met."

Mary returned her compact to her purse. "Yes. I believe Mr. LaTour introduced us."

"That's right," Hanson said. "Now, while I know this won't be pleasant for you, Miss Daly, I'd like your version of what happened."

"My version?"

Hanson conceded the point. "All right. What *happened* to you?"

"I was raped," Mary told him. "Almost continuously for two hours. By four boys who said they were waiting for Terry." She explained, "The teenage occupant of this apartment."

"Do you think they were telling the truth? I mean about waiting for her?"

"I have no way of knowing that. But they *said* they'd met her on a private beach somewhere north of Turnbull Woods and she had agreed to be intimate with them, then had run out on them at the last minute."

"I see," Hanson said. He offered the black-haired teacher

a cigarette. "And just how did you happen to come in here, Miss Daly?"

Mary waited for him to light her cigarette. "That's very simple. I kept hearing mysterious noises, running water, the refrigerator door being opened, the facility in the bathroom being flushed. Anyway, I thought Terry had come home while I'd been napping. So, without bothering to dress, just wearing a wraparound wrapper, as I frequently do, I slipped out the back door of my apartment and through the unlocked back door of this one. But instead of finding Terry in the living room, I found four boys eating sandwiches and drinking beer."

"Weren't you frightened?"

Mary blew smoke at the ceiling. "Not at first. I teach boys the same age five days a week every week of the school year. And by the time I realized they were drunk and probably high on goof balls, it was too late to do anything about it. The one they called Frankie had gotten between me and the door."

"And then?"

"When I tried to get past him and return to my own apartment, he clamped his palm over my mouth and told me I wasn't going anywhere, at least not until Terry had come home and they had given her, as he put it, what she had coming to her."

"Did they say anything about where they thought she might be or when she would return?"

"No, they didn't."

"Please continue, Miss Daly."

The schoolteacher picked a flake of tobacco from her lips. "I believe their original intention was to tie me up to prevent me from warning Terry that they were waiting for her. But when I continued to struggle my wrapper fell open and exposed my body and just looking at me seemed to excite them."

She continued bitterly, "For a moment or two all they did was make lewd remarks about how well I was 'stacked' and run their hands over my breasts and my bottom and my private parts. Then one of them, I don't remember which one, suggested they show me a good time while they waited for Terry."

She wept silently. "I begged them not to do something

they'd be sorry for. I tried to point out that I was years older than they were. But by then they were too excited to even listen to me. And after Frankie had taken a roll of adhesive tape from his pocket and slapped some of it over my mouth to keep me from screaming, they dragged me into Terry's bedroom. And after they'd pushed me down on the bed, with Harry and Solly holding me spread-eagled and Joe Joe holding the point of a switchblade at my throat, Frankie exposed himself and raped me. And when he'd finished, he traded places with Joe Joe. Then he and Joe Joe held me and watched and made lewd remarks while the other two boys took their turns." Hysteria wasn't far behind the tears trickling down her wet cheeks. "And when they'd all finished with me the first time, they decided they liked what I had so much, they all went around again."

Lieutenant Hanson tried to think of something to say. All he could think of was, "I'm sorry."

"You're sorry?" the girl on the bed said hotly. "How the hell do you think I feel? I was the one they raped." She added, "So the building is filled with police now. Where were you when I needed you?"

"I'm sorry," Hanson repeated.

The police matron handed the young woman a glass of water and two seconal capsules. "The police surgeon said I should give you these if I thought you needed them."

Mary put the capsules in her mouth and washed them down with a sip of water. "And it went on like that for the next two hours. First one of them, then another. Until I lost count of the number of times. But with Frankie the worst offender. Because every time he possessed me, he seemed to have a psychopathic obsession to make me respond to him. And every time he'd spend his filthy male seminal fluid in me, he'd tell me how wonderful I was and what a beautiful body I had and how much prettier I was than someone he called Rosa."

She finished drinking the water in the glass and returned the glass to the police matron. "Then after it had gone on for what seemed forever and Frankie and I were alone in the bedroom, and the other boys were in the kitchen, I managed to make him understand I needed to go to the bathroom. And he let me get up from the bed and go into the bathroom alone. He even let me close the door. But I didn't

stop in the bathroom. Crying and naked as I was, and in a state of semishock, I kept right on going through this room to the living room and the front door. I even managed to get the door open and tear off the tape and scream for help."

The corners of her mouth turned down. "But one of the boys had put the night chain on the door. And before I could get it unfastened, Frankie heard me and caught me and hit me. And after he'd slammed the door shut and covered my mouth with fresh tape, he dragged me back into the other bedroom and pushed me down on the bed and the whole thing started all over. He said he was tired of having women make a fool of him. And because I'd tried to be so smart and get them all into trouble by calling for help, when Terry did come home the other fellows could have her." Tears continued to trickle down her cheeks faster than she could wipe them away. "And after he'd inserted his rigid flesh into my body again, he redoubled his efforts to make me respond to him. Because as he put it, in his words, he was going to screw me until he made me screw back if he had to screw me all night. And he was still trying when the men in the building broke down the front door and Mr. LaTour came into the bedroom."

A deep-rooted sob shook her body. "Now please don't make me talk about it any more. I can't."

Lieutenant Hanson got to his feet. "Thank you very much, Miss Daly. What you have told us should give us everything we need right now. At least enough for my preliminary report." He added, rather awkwardly, "And while I know it's no consolation to you, I can't tell you how sorry I am this happened, how much I wish we could have prevented it from happening." He continued quietly, "Now you try to get some sleep. And sometime late tomorrow afternoon, after you are rested and the experience is a little less vivid, and the doctors have completed their tests, I'll send a police typist up to your hospital room and you can dictate what you've just told me to her, then sign a formal statement."

Mary accepted the piece of facial tissue the police matron was offering her, then moved her head slowly from side to side. "No."

"No what?" Hanson puzzled.

"No formal statement," Mary said. "You wanted to know

what happened. I've told you." She wiped her cheeks with the tissue and dropped it beside the bed. "But I'm not going to dictate or sign anything. And I'm certainly not going to repeat what I've told you in front of a grand jury or a judge."

She paused briefly. "In the first place, I'd die of shame if I had to repeat what I've told you from the witness stand. In the second place, it would probably cost me my job. And I have no desire to change professions and wind up back on the street where I was born as the only amateur whore on North Clark Street with a Ph.D. degree. I've worked too long and too hard to get where I am. I won't even identify the boys. I don't ever want to see them again. And if you try to make me testify, I'll deny the whole thing happened, deny that any of them forced me to be intimate with them."

"Oh, come now, Miss Daly," Hanson protested. "I know you've had a rough time and have every right to be bitter. But I also know that, being a teacher, you know the current situation as well as I do, know the trouble every law-enforcement agency has in building a case against a juvenile."

"That's just it," the girl on the bed said. The barbituate the matron had given her was beginning to take effect and her speech was becoming slurred. "No matter what I might say from the witness stand, nor what you police prove, nothing will really happen to the boys. As you say, they're juveniles. And by the time some bleeding-heart lawyer finished his summation to a jury, he'd probably convince them I enticed the boys into being intimate with me. Either that or some impotent old judge, remembering the good times he used to have in the rumble seat of an Essex, will slap them on their wrists and send them to a work camp or a reformatory for a few months."

Hanson admitted, "I admit there's a lot in what you say. But this still is, or is supposed to be, a nation of laws. And if you refuse to testify, we won't have much of a case. This with one man in the hospital with a serious knife wound because he tried to help you. And if the punk Frenchy shot should die, and you refuse to take the stand, the old man could be in serious trouble."

"I realize all that," Mary said. "And I'm deeply appreciative of what both Mr. Rogers and Mr. LaTour and the

other men in the building did. But I'll have to find some other way of showing my appreciation."

It was becoming more and more of an effort for her to translate her thoughts into words. "Because, while nothing will give me back what I lost this afternoon, I'm not going to lose my livelihood and my good name along with my virginity. . . . Look at it from my viewpoint, Lieutenant. . . . If this goes to trial, it will be headlined in all of the newspapers. . . . And even if the Board of Education didn't take any formal action, how do you think I'd feel walking into a high-school classroom with every girl in it knowing that I'd had repeated sexual congress with four teenage boys? . . . And every boy in the class probably wishing he'd been one of them wondering what kind of bed partner I was."

Her eyes closed. Her body slumped. Hanson thought she was asleep. Then her eyes fluttered open briefly, and she said thickly, but distinctly:

"And that was so easily ascertainable. As one city employee to another, I think you ought to know that, Lieutenant Hanson. As Mr. LaTour might say, all it would have cost you was a dime . . . the tenth part of a dollar . . . one lousy little thin dime for a phone call . . . and a license. I wouldn't even have insisted on a priest."

BOOK THREE

CHAPTER 16

POLICE FACE HAZARDS. In 1965 about one out of every 10 police officers was attacked during the course of duty. The situation was worse in the South Atlantic States, most orderly in New England. Of 118 individuals arrested in the killing of 113 police officers, 21 received the death penalty, 41 were given life sentences, 24 were given shorter terms, 4 went to mental hospitals. In addition to those arrested, 19 were killed by the police and five committed suicide.

CRIME STATISTICS

Six days a week Lieutenant Hanson ate his breakfast sitting in one of the booths or on one of the stools in the combination bar and coffeehouse a half block from the precinct station. In spite of the fact that he'd had less than two hours' sleep, he saw no reason to change his routine. At 7:30 A.M., yawning but freshly shaved and wearing his best lightweight summer suit and a baby-blue silk tie he normally reserved for social occasions, he strode into the restaurant, sat on one of the stools and ordered his usual breakfast.

Four eggs over easy. A double rasher of bacon. Ditto on the cottage fries. Four slices of toast. Coffee. And four donuts to stay his appetite while he waited for his food to arrive.

Dunking one of the donuts in the coffee the admiring counter girl set in front of him, he picked up and skimmed through the morning paper left by the previous occupant of the stool.

"Rough night, Lieutenant?" the waitress asked him.

"I've seen better," Hanson admitted.

The early edition of the morning paper had been put to bed some hours before he'd signed out. There was little in

it concerning the affair in apartment 303 of the remodeled brownstone he didn't already know. The big detective gave the city editor and the reporter assigned to the story their just due. The affair of the afternoon before was reported as factually as possible without mention of Miss Daly's name.

Adhering to the unwritten code of saving the victim of a sexual assault as much embarrassment as possible, while there was a picture of Terry Jones and one of her father on the front page, there was no picture of Miss Daly. In this early edition, at least, the schoolteacher was referred to as "the tenant next door" and "a very attractive twenty-six-year-old female employee of the Chicago Board of Education."

Hanson skimmed down the double column of print on the left-hand side of the front page. According to the reporter who'd written the story, four teenage boys, Harry Davis, Franklin Delano Hahn, Jerry (Joe Joe) Mason, and Solly Webber, all of them third-year students at Blaine Technical High School, claiming to have met her on an unidentified beach, had somehow obtained the key to the apartment of the youthful Miss Terry Jones.

After having spent Memorial Day morning drinking illicitly obtained beer and whiskey, and under the influence of an unknown quantity of amphetamine, better known under the trade name of Benzedrine, at approximately 4:15 in the afternoon, they had used the key to gain entrance to the luxury apartment located in a soon-to-be-demolished apartment building on the Near North Side, where, it was reported, they had done considerable damage to the expensive furnishings during its occupant's absence.

The story continued. At approximately the same time, hearing movement and strange voices in the apartment, and concerned for the welfare of her youthful neighbor, the tenant next door, a very attractive twenty-six-year-old female employee of the Chicago Board of Education, had entered the apartment through an unlocked rear door. It was alleged by the police and the police surgeon who had examined the young woman that all four of the boys had abused and assaulted her sexually an unknown number of times. This over a two-hour period before four male tenants of the building who happened to be spending the holiday at home had heard a scream and an appeal for help and had

broken down the locked and bolted front door of the apartment.

The four men were named and identified. Michael Adamowski was a practicing attorney reputed to be prominent in local left-of-center circles. Rodolfo Garcia, another of the men, was said to have been an extremely wealthy Cuban businessman and mill and plantation owner prior to the takeover by the present Cuban government. Leo Rogers was a literary agent and onetime writer with offices in the Loop. The fourth man, Mr. Roland (Frenchy) LaTour, was believed to have been a former carnival and circus employee.

Shortly after 6:00 P.M., and a few minutes before the arrival of a squad of police led by Lieutenant Ejler Hanson, after having been refused admission, the four men had broken in the door of the apartment that the teenage Miss Jones shared with her evangelistic father when he was in Chicago. It was further alleged that one of the men, Mr. Roland (Frenchy) LaTour, incensed by what he had witnessed when he opened the bedroom door, had fired four shots from a .45-caliber pistol, two of the bullets striking and seriously wounding one of the youths.

The wounded youth, Franklin Delano Hahn, was currently in critical condition in the prison ward at Cook County Hospital and Mr. LaTour, charged with suspicion of assault with intent to kill, was being detained by the police until a full investigation of the incident could be completed. Also hospitalized was the purported victim of the assault and Mr. Leo Rogers, who had been seriously wounded with a switchblade knife that had somehow been overlooked by the arresting officer who had searched the accused teenagers.

Hanson reread the last item. That could mean a trial board for Brotz, less than two months short of his pension. Not that he blamed Herman for having missed the knife when he had searched the punks.

In the confusion following their arrival, with Miss Daly weeping in one room, the Hahn punk bleeding all over the bathroom floor and screaming for his mother, the four male tenants of the building, and two wives and Mrs. Mason, all trying to talk at one time, and the three boys still on their feet blubbering about how sorry they were for what they'd done, and please don't hurt them, anything could have happened. Unfortunately, something had.

Before any of them, with the exception of the heavy-set literary agent, had realized what was happening, suddenly terrified by the realization he was going to have to pay for what he'd done, the punk the others called Joe Joe had whipped out the overlooked switchblade and would undoubtedly have plunged it into Brotz's back in a frantic attempt to escape if Mr. Rogers hadn't had the guts to step in between them and take the five inch blade in his own belly as he had grappled with and subdued the drug crazed teenager.

Brotz would never come closer to dying. Hanson used his breast-pocket handkerchief to pat at the perspiration on his face. The incident could also mean a trial board for him. Such things weren't supposed to happen and he'd been the officer in charge.

"Is your coffee too hot, Lieutenant?" the waitress asked.

Hanson returned his attention to the paper. "No. The coffee is fine."

The waitress was morbidly curious. "Was it like it says in the paper, Lieutenant? Did the boys really do it to her for two hours?"

"That's what it says here," Hanson said.

He read on. In an interview at the hospital with the wounded boy's parents, both Mr. and Mrs. Hahn, Mr. Hahn described as a senior executive with the Lullaby Di-Dee Service Company, had both been very emphatic in their insistence there had to be some tragic mistake. The reporter quoted the boy's mother as saying:

"Frankie is a good boy. A little restless, perhaps. But he's never been in trouble before. And that vicious old man had no right to shoot him. I don't know anything about either of the young women involved. I don't care to. But I doubt if either of them move in our strata of society, and if there was any sexual intimacy involved, you can be certain one of them started it. Frankie has always been a perfect little gentleman where girls and women are concerned. And very sympathetic with the problems of the less fortunate. Why only a few months ago he took a week off from school and drove south to participate in one of the civil-rights marches."

How wrong can you be? Hanson thought. He'd gotten at least that much of the story from one of the boys before the juvenile authorities had taken them away. He'd been at-

tempting to determine why the wounded boy had been wearing a beard when Mrs. Mason had first seen him and was clean-shaven when they'd found him lying on the bathroom floor and Harry Davis had told him:

"Frankie grew it to drive south, see? The way we got the story at school, all you had to do was grow a beard and walk a few miles with the dinges in one of their freedom marches and they'd give you ten dollars a day, and you could have any girl you wanted, either white or colored, as many times as you wanted to jump her."

"And that was what happened to Frankie?"

"Anyway what he told us when he got back. He said he'd slept with two fifteen-year-old sisters and a pretty bright skin who taught in a college."

"Then why did he shave off his beard in Miss Jones's bathroom?"

The answer to that had been equally frank.

"Because he thought maybe it had tickled Terry when he was putting the blocks to her out on the beach and that was why she had twisted away from him and run out on us."

"You mean that Miss Jones was willingly intimate with him?"

"Well, no. Not willingly. We had to threaten to punch her around a little first. And she was bawling like anything when we left her and Frankie alone on the blanket."

Frankie the paragon of virtue. Frankie the perfect little gentleman where girls and women were concerned. Frankie the manly defender of the less fortunate.

When the waitress set his breakfast in front of him, Hanson ate it with relish, but continued to skim through the newspaper account of the affair to make certain he hadn't missed anything that could be pertinent to the investigation or his appearance before the court and the grand jury when the Department moved to have the four boys certified as adults and then indicted for multiple criminal rape. And, if Mr. Rogers should die, for murder.

There were only two other items of interest, one of them known to him. The police were attempting to locate Miss Jones to learn the extent of her involvement in the affair. The other he hadn't known, the true identity of the female tenant who'd phoned for the police.

According to the story, as written by the reporter, Mrs.

Lamar Mason was in reality Lou Chandler, once of Herrin, Illinois. She was also the widow of a prominent gambling figure known as Abracadabra, a feminine cohort of the late Dion O'Banion and Hymie Weiss, and a notorious madam of the Prohibition era who, at one time, had run a deluxe house of ill repute in the very building in which she was currently leasing an apartment.

Curious, Hanson looked to see if there was a picture of Mrs. Mason in her younger days on the followup on the second page. There might be in later editions, but there wasn't any in this one.

However, judging from her present state of preservation, she must have been a beautiful young woman. An errant thought amused Hanson: now the next time any of his amorous relatives from Minnesota came to town, he could boast that he'd met at least one famous whore. Not that her former mode of life showed on Mrs. Mason. In fact, while he'd been talking to her, he'd been impressed by her intelligence and the fact she was so obviously a lady.

Hanson pushed his coffee cup across the counter for a last refill and ordered a carton of black coffee and two Danish to go. While he'd been rather put out at the time, Miss Daly had called the turn in at least one respect. The interview with the Hahn boy's mother pinpointed that.

In present-day society, youth in itself was an almost impregnable defense. Time after time, he and his fellow officers hauled in punks with rap sheets as long as his arm, on squeals involving everything from mugging to assault with a deadly weapon, and from criminal and statutory rape to boosting hub caps. But by the time that the court-appointed psychiatrists and social workers finished their nit picking and overlenient juvenile-court judges got through kicking the case around, in nine cases out of ten all that the arresting officers got out of it was egg on their faces.

As the waitress set the brown paper bag containing the carton of coffee and the two pieces of pastry in front of him, then totaled his check, she sympathized, "You've got yourself a cutie, huh, Lieutenant?"

Hanson slipped a half dollar under the rim of his saucer. "So it seems. But then the older heads tell me these things happen."

The waitress watched him walk up the aisle to the cash-

ier's desk, then out through the front door of the restaurant and past the big plate-glass window, and sighed. "Now that's what I call a man. Something that blonde and good-looking and six feet tall, drawing a lieutenant of detectives' pay check, should happen to me. I wouldn't care what he wanted to do. Believe me, I wouldn't even struggle."

"Down girl," the waitress in the next section said. "What makes you think you're first in line?"

"So sue me."

"I suppose the lieutenant ordered his usual four eggs and double rasher of bacon?"

The girl who had waited on Hanson nodded as she dropped the half-dollar tip into the pocket of her apron and cleared away the dishes he'd used. "Why should this morning be different? There's a lot of man there. Like I read in an article once, that's the main trouble with the world today. There are too many one-egg and not enough four-egg men."

The other waitress considered the subject, then was philosophical about it. "Well, if all of him is scaled to size, and I imagine it is, all you'd need is one."

CHAPTER 17

On any other weekday of the year the street would be bumper to bumper and fender to fender with delivery and service trucks and the private cars of harassed motorists hopeful of reaching their places of gainful employment before their 8-A.M. deadline. There would be a continuous blaring of horns and a squealing of brakes and the impact of metal on metal, the whole blended into an urban tympanic symphony by vocally exchanged "pleasantries" and the shrill tooting of the traffic officers' whistles.

This holiday Monday morning, the last day of the three-day holiday, the street was almost completely denuded of traffic and the sidewalks equally as barren of pedestrians.

As Hanson walked the few yards to the station house, swinging the brown paper sack containing the carton of coffee and the pastries he'd bought for Frenchy LaTour, to liven up the precinct-station cell-block fare of a bologna sandwich, he felt almost hemmed in by the abnormal silence. As far as noise and people were concerned, he could be back on his father's farm in Saulk Prairie.

He didn't ever want to live on a farm again. God forbid. But living on a farm had its attractions. He wouldn't ever forget the spring mornings, hushed with dawn and wet with dew, when he'd walked bare foot down the lane to round up the milch cows, with perhaps the cawing of an early-rising crow or the plaintive cry of a kildeer the only sound in his world, and with the nearest other human being a full quarter section away.

Then, after he'd driven the cows into the barn and they'd been milked, by hand in those days, and they'd cleaned the stables and spread fresh straw, and forked silage into the mangers and had grained the horses, they'd carried the frothy buckets of milk up to the house, and either he or one

of his brothers, not too fast, not too slow, had turned the handle on the old manually operated Laval cream separator.

Then, poor as they'd always been, they'd all sat down to a big breakfast of flapjacks and side meat, and great platters of eggs swimming in grease, and fried potatoes, and huge mounds of hot biscuits and honey, and usually a piece of cherry or apple pie that had been left over from the evening meal.

Whenever he looked back on those days he was always impressed by the fact that the only thing that they hadn't had was money. And the irony of that was, if his father had held on to the farm instead of selling it for little or nothing and moving to Chicago in the hope of finding a job, with farm prices what they currently were, the acreage he'd practically given away would have made the old man independently wealthy.

Hanson stopped to light a cigarette and realized he was stalling. Normally, he couldn't wait for his tour of duty to begin. He liked his work. That was why he was trying to get a law degree. Not because he wanted to be a lawyer. Because when the opportunity came he wanted to know all facets of the law, be ready and prepared to move up into the higher echelons of law enforcement.

There were times, though, when a man's professional life and his emotions came into conflict. This was one of them. This morning, given a choice, he could wish he was anywhere but where he was and anything but a lieutenant of detectives. Especially a lieutenant of detectives working out of this particular precinct station.

One of the hardest things he'd ever had to do in the line of duty had been to arrest and book Frenchy LaTour. Arrest him for being a man. Book him for taking the law into his own hands.

And now if the Hahn boy should die, even in view of the circumstances surrounding the shooting, the Department was going to have almost as much of a job prying the old carnival man out of the jam he was in as they were in getting an indictment against the remaining three boys.

What really should happen to them, Hanson thought, was that they all should be castrated, publicly, as an example to other young punks who might be tempted to try a similar caper. He mulled the thought at the foot of the grooved

stone steps of the precinct station's entrance. If any living man was more attracted to the opposite sex or enjoyed the carnal relations between a man and a woman more than he did, the stud would have to be born with four testicles and a permanent erection.

He was in favor of sex, had been ever since the slightly older blonde daughter of a neighboring German farmer had introduced him to the subject during the cool of the evening at a Fourth of July picnic.

But sex was a two-way street. And any man, or boy, who would force any woman, or girl, to submit to him against her will, or brutalize her during the act, was beneath contempt. He was lower than a pimp or a pusher. And you couldn't get any lower than that.

Hanson stepped aside to allow the uniformed officers who had just stood roll call to file down the steps of the station enroute to take up their respective posts, pondering the last thing Miss Daly had told him when she had explained why she intended to refuse to testify against the boys.

Then, after she'd made it clear she didn't intend to chance losing her livelihood along with what she'd already lost and had gone into the bit about walking into a classroom with all of the girls in it knowing she'd been raped, and all of the boys wondering what sort of a bed partner she was, she'd said:

"And that was so easily ascertainable. As one city employee to another, I think you ought to know that, Lieutenant Hanson. As Mr. LaTour might say, all it would have cost you was a dime . . . the tenth part of a dollar . . . one lousy little thin dime for a phone call . . . and a license. I wouldn't even have insisted on a priest."

Translated freely:

"When we met on the stairs and Frenchy introduced us, I was as much attracted to you as you, seemingly, were to me. And if you had followed up the introduction by spending a dime on a phone call and asking me for a date and we found out we liked each other well enough to make the connection permanent, I wouldn't even have insisted on being married in my church."

A big concession from as devout a Catholic as Miss Daly. Now, after what happened to her, however, only Mary, and possibly the ghosts of Herren Freud and Adler, knew what

the current score was. Against that, as far as he was concerned, the fact that she'd been abused and assaulted repeatedly against her will didn't create any particular mental hazard for him.

It had been a long time since he'd been virgin. Besides, having been on the Force for as many years as he had, dealing as he did every day with the more sordid aspects of life, he'd learned how to evaluate such things. Sex *per se*, with or without the consent of the woman, was merely one facet of living, and not in itself an entity. A wife or a sweetheart could cheat on a man, or be raped, but once the first natural blow to his masculine pride had subsided, a man seldom lost interest in or refused to use the merchandise merely because it had become slightly shopworn. And once he was firmly back in the saddle, there were few traumatic side effects.

How Miss Daly would react physically and emotionally to what had happened was something else. As far as women were concerned, there were no set rules. The multiple assault on her person might stimulate her interest in the subject. It might turn her frigid. It could make her hate all men. It could even tip the fine, almost hairline, balance between normality and tribadism.

He'd had a case only a few months before when he'd had to book an extremely pretty and very intelligent twenty-year-old dike for beating up her squab because she'd walked in on her pigeon cheating with a fast-talking door-to-door vacuum-cleaner salesman.

Impressed by the fact that the girl was so essentially feminine, with none of the usual external masculine traits, he'd asked her how she'd gotten that way. And the lesb had told him, in four-letter words. Her mother, a widow, had married again when she'd been twelve years old. And a few weeks after the marriage, while her mother had been out one afternoon, her new fifty-year-old stepfather had raped her both front and back, then wound up his afternoon orgy by forcing her to perform a so-called unnatural act. And ever since then, while she'd tried, because she didn't want to be different, every time she attempted to have normal sexual congress with a man, the feel of his flesh in her body made her so sick to her stomach she had to excuse herself and throw up.

Hanson walked on into the station. On the surface, nothing had changed since he'd signed out the night before. The station house smelled as all police precinct stations smelled, of years of accumulated stale cigar and cigarette smoke, of unwashed bodies and sweeping compound, of leather and guns and gun oil.

This morning, though, there was a difference. Normally by the turn of the morning shift, the booking office was doing a good business. Normally the foyer in front of the desk was alive with bail bondsmen and police-court shysters, weeping wives with wailing children clinging to their skirts, catamites and sodomites and Angelinas, pushers and users and shills, a half dozen assorted brawlers, male and female, white and colored, and always three or four blowsy five-dollar muffs, working the morning rush hour, who had been picked up for attempting to use one end of them to earn enough money for a jug to pour down their other end in an attempt to assuage what amounted to a permanent hangover.

This morning, Allah be praised, the calm of the street had permeated the interior. There was no milling crowd in the foyer. None of the phones on the desk was ringing. There wasn't even one reporter asking to look at the booking blotter.

"How come?" Hanson asked the desk sergeant as he signed in.

"Don't even ask, Lieutenant," the man cautioned him. "You might break the spell. Just be grateful for as long as it lasts." He indicated the brown paper bag that Hanson was carrying. "But if that's coffee and Danish for the old carnival Joe that you boys brought in last night, forget it?"

"Why so?"

"Because Ginnis and Meyers and Herman had the same idea. Only Herman brought ham and eggs on a tray, with fresh blueberry muffins." He lowered his voice to a more confidential tone. "It's true what I hear, huh? That Herman almost got it last night?"

"That's right," Hanson said. "He missed a switchblade that one of the punks was carrying. And if it hadn't been for one of the guys in the building, a Mr. Leo Rogers, Herman and Adele could have kissed Florida goodbye. Because right about now, if it hadn't been for Mr. Rogers,

those half-assed in-laws Herman is always bitching about would be standing around some undertaker's worktable, saying, 'Doesn't the bum look natural?' And asking, Adele, 'Now aren't you glad you married a cop?' " Hanson picked the brown paper sack from the desk. "Well, anyway, I'll go back and say good morning to Frenchy."

The desk sergeant shook his head. "Not in our lockup you won't. Because like I told the rest of your squad, the old man isn't with us anymore."

"Don't tell me the punk died and Homicide came out and picked up LaTour?"

"No," the desk sergeant said. "Simmer down. As far as I know it's still your case. But about six o'clock this morning," he shuffled through the papers on his desk, "the good-looking old broad who lives in the building—what's her name? The one it says in the paper used to be a high-class hooker?"

"Mrs. Mason?"

"That's it." The desk sergeant found the paper for which he was looking. "Here it is right here. Mrs. Lamar Mason, Apartment 101, 196 East Westmore. Anyway, at 6:04 A.M., to be exact, she and Grecko and Riley, and that glib-talking lawyer who lives in the building, the one who helped break down the door—"

"Just one minute," Hanson interrupted him. "Who in hell are Grecko and Riley?"

"That's right," the white-haired desk sergeant said. "You wouldn't know them, would you? They were before your time." He confided, "Well, for your information, Lieutenant, Phil Grecko and Matt Riley were two of the toughest hoods in Chicago back when I was a rookie and you probably weren't even born. They were part of the Dion O'Banion-Hymie Weiss, mob. Gunsels or torpedos we used to call them in those days and everytime someone in one of the other mobs got killed, we used to haul them in regularly, although we never proved nothing on 'em. Anyway, they walked in here this morning with Mrs. Mason and Adamowski, just as cocky as ever, and looking like money in the bank. A lot of money." The old man was mildly nostalgic. "What I mean, for a few minutes, it was just like old times."

"So what has all that got to do with Frenchy LaTour?" Hanson asked.

"I'm trying to tell you," the desk sergeant said. "The four of them came in at six o'clock this morning with a writ of habeas corpus and a court order signed by Judge Harold Tyler Green admitting one Roland (Frenchy) LaTour to five thousand dollars' bail."

Hanson opened the carton of coffee he'd bought for LaTour. "I don't believe it. You're putting me on. You have to be. Where do you find a judge during a three-day Memorial Day weekend? Especially Judge Green. That smug, sanctimonious, dried-up old prig wouldn't set bail for his own mother."

The other man shrugged. "So maybe someone twisted his arm. Anyway he did set bail. And after Adamowski showed his papers to the watch commander, while Grecko and Riley were arguing which one of them was going to post it, the old broad opened an alligator bag that must have cost more than I make in a month and dropped five grand in cash on my desk as if it was so much lettuce."

"It probably was to her."

"Probably," the desk sergeant agreed. "What with as pretty as she still is, and with the figure she still has, and if she really ran around with the crowd it says in the paper she did, I'll bet in the days when she was peddling her butt it cost plenty to jump her. Maybe even as much as a hundred bucks."

Hanson ate one of the Danish he'd bought for LaTour. "Could be. Like you pointed out, I wasn't around in those days."

"Did you ever sleep with a hundred-dollar hooker, Ejler?"

"On my salary? Hell no. Why?"

"Just curious," the desk sergeant said. "I've booked dozens of them and they look like any other broad to me. But just once before I die, I'd like to know what they have and what they do with it that makes it so special."

"If I ever find out, I'll tell you."

"You do that."

Hanson washed the last of the pastry down with the last of the coffee and dropped the carton and the paper bag in the trash container beside the booking desk. "And so to work. Anything new on the Jones kid yet? The all-points bring in anything?"

"Not yet," the desk man said. "Anyway, I still have her

listed as missing." As Hanson started back down the hall to the squad room, he called after him, "Oh, yes, Lieutenant. I almost forgot. Captain Hardy wants to see you."

Hanson looked down the hall at the open door of the watch commander's office. "I don't suppose you know why?"

"Yes," the desk sergeant admitted. "As a matter of fact, I do. On account of the bad press we got in the morning paper because of Herman making that booboo he did, the captain wasn't in a very good mood when he came in this morning. Then when he read your preliminary report, what I mean he really blew his stack. I could hear him yelling 'way out here. He wanted to know what the hell you meant when you said that while Miss Daly had admitted to you that the four punks had attacked her repeatedly, and the police surgeon confirmed the fact that she'd been raped and abused, she wouldn't sign a statement, or testify before the grand jury, or even identify the boys."

"That's what she told me," Hanson said.

The desk sergeant shrugged. "Then I would say it is a very good thing, Lieutenant, if you want to keep on being a lieutenant, that you are wearing that baby-blue tie this morning."

"Why?" Hanson asked warily.

"Because," the desk sergeant said, "matching your eyes the way it does, it is very becoming. And if the captain is still as sore as he was when he read your report, I have a fair idea that before the morning is over you are going to find yourself in Miss Daly's hospital room, using that big he-man blonde Swedish charm of yours trying to get her to change her mind."

CHAPTER 18

SOMETHING NEW
Wabash Music Co.
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The bell on the spring over the door tinkled musically as Jack Stafford came in from the street. After the outside heat, the papa and mama deli, so-called because it was strictly a one-couple operation catering to the small needs of the apartment dwellers in the neighborhood, was deliciously cool. It smelled, delightfully so, of home-made German potato salad and kosher dill pickles and assorted sharp cheese and Polish sausage and salami and other highly spiced cold cuts.

The appeal to the eye was just as attractive. There were great mounds of colorful salads in trays, two whole roasted turkeys awaiting carving, a dozen barbecued chickens turning on spits, long rows of bottles of domestic and imported wines, and behind the immaculate glass doors of the cold case the various dairy products and six-packs of local and imported beers and cases of mixes and soft drinks.

Stafford consulted the list that his wife had given him. It didn't read like much of a holiday dinner. Not that he blamed Rita. Feeling as she did about the incident in the building, it was only natural their relations should be slightly strained. Then, too, with their almost constant rehearsing for their opening on Wednesday night, they were both too

fatigued to eat out. What with moving in the morning and most of their cooking utensils, with the exception of the coffee pot, packed away in the cartons and barrels the advance guard of the movers had dropped off the Friday afternoon before, it would be, at best, a makeshift meal.

He bought a loaf of no-calorie wholewheat bread, a quarter of a pound of unsalted butter, a can of small green peas, then daringly substituted a carton of potato salad and a barbecued chicken for the yogurt and six slices of boiled ham on his list, then, even more daringly, added a bottle of Liebfraumilch. With the wineglasses packed, they would have to drink it out of paper cups, but that shouldn't alter the taste.

Nor, as he'd told Rita time after time, was it a matter of cost. His frugality in the matter of food was basically for the same reason that he wore a beard. He was merely trying to preserve their image. With the exception of Burl Ives, who'd ever seen a fat and well-fed-looking folk singer? For all the success they'd achieved, even Peter, Paul, and Mary managed to preserve a slightly wan and interestingly emaciated look. There would be plenty of time for two-inch-thick filet mignons and lobster thermidor once they'd achieved their goal.

His purchases securely sacked and paid for, he paused to buy an early-afternoon edition of the evening paper from the wire rack in front of the delicatessen and walked slowly back through the heat, skimming the front page of the paper.

As yet the police had not been able to locate the teenage occupant of apartment 303, but her evangelist father had been contacted in Juarez, Mexico, and was scheduled to fly back to Chicago as soon as he could make the necessary arrangements to conclude the series of internationally televised revival meetings he was conducting.

Of special interest to the police was the fact that the two-piece pastel-green playsuit that the missing girl had been known to be wearing when she had left the building at approximately 11 A.M. on Sunday morning had been found in the beach bag that the four youths held on suspicion of multiple sexual assault had brought with them to the apartment. The garment had been definitely identified by both Mrs. Lamar Mason and Mr. Roland (Frenchy) LaTour, who had, respectively, seen and talked to the girl shortly before

her departure from the building. Of equal interest to the police was an expensive medical book also found in the raffia beach bag with the corner of the page containing colored illustrations of human embryos in the various ovulation stages turned down, as if the missing girl had consulted it frequently.

However, questioned by juvenile officers, three of the teenage youths involved denied that they had ever met or known Miss Jones, or even seen her, before her car had sideswiped theirs near the turnoff above Turnbull Woods and they had later seen and accosted her on the private beach of an unoccupied North Shore estate. The three youths were equally as emphatic in denying that they had physically molested the blonde girl in any way and swore that she had been alive and unharmed and driving her own car when they last had seen her.

As one of them, Jerry (Joe Joe) Mason had expressed it, "All we did was fool around with her a little and threaten to work her over if she wouldn't put out."

Under intensive questioning, though, Harry Davis had admitted to juvenile officers that the fourth youth involved, Franklin Delano Hahn, had divested the girl of her playsuit and had been engaged in the actual act of copulation with her when she had twisted away from him and had taken off like an X-14, the only garments she had been wearing being her sandals and a pair of white cotton bikini briefs.

Now, according to the reporter who'd written the story, it also transpired that despite their unkempt appearance when the youths had been taken into custody, they weren't underprivileged, merely undersupervised.

The youth whom Mr. LaTour had shot and seriously wounded was the stepson of a well-to-do laundry executive. Another of the fathers owned and operated a thriving upholstery and drapery business. Another was the district supervisor for a national drug concern, while the fourth was a purchasing agent for a large local manufacturing company.

All four boys were third-year students at a North Side technical high school. All four had minor police records, but none of them had ever been in serious trouble before. All eight parents, when located and questioned by the reporter, had insisted that their sons were good boys. The wounded

boy's mother, Mrs. Hahn, described as a former model and buyer for one of the larger and better-known Loop department stores, had been especially vehement in denying any of the guilt attributed to her son either by the police or his three companions. The reporter quoted her as saying:

"I know my boy. A sweeter, kinder, cleaner-minded boy never existed. My Frankie wouldn't ever force his attentions on any girl. And I don't care what the police, or the police surgeon who is alleged to have examined this unnamed 'very attractive twenty-six-year-old female employee of the Chicago Board of Education' say. If there was any sexual intimacy involved, you can be certain she initiated it. She's probably some frustrated frotz who can't get a man, so she makes a practice of seducing young boys."

Stafford waited for the traffic signal on the corner, then crossed on the green light. That wasn't the way that he and Rita had heard it. Both the scream and the appeal for help had been genuine.

To keep from thinking about his and Rita's part in the affair, he found and read the latest revelations concerning Mrs. Lamar Mason. Judging from the way the tenant in 101 had lived and had kept to herself ever since she'd moved into the building, all she'd wanted was to be forgotten. Now, despite the fact her only involvement had been to phone for the police, at Mr. Adamowski's request, the afternoon paper hadn't left her a shred of anonymity.

After all, even if she hadn't practiced her profession for years, she was the widow of a onetime notorious gambler and race-track fixer, and in her own right the madam of one of the most glittering mansions of sin that Chicago had ever known. After all, she'd run a fifteen-girl house that in its day had ranked with the famous house of ill repute run by the long since deceased Ada and Minna Everleigh.

To make certain that his readers knew just what type of clientele the former Lou Chandler had entertained, the reporter had sprinkled his story liberally with the names of the more colorful political and underworld élite of the era, such names as Dion O'Banion and Hymie Weiss and Phil Grecko and Nails Morton and Matt Riley and Bugs Moran and Machine-Gun Jack McGurn.

As he approached the soon-to-be-demolished brownstone, the thirty-two-year-old bearded folk singer folded the after-

noon paper and put it in his side coat pocket and shifted the bag of groceries to his other arm. It was one for the book. For the past three years the oh so proper, if not eminent folk singing team of Jack and Rita Stafford had been living in a former cat house. For all they knew everytime that he and Rita had been intimate the ghosts of one of Lou Chandler's girls and one or more of her customers had watched their performance with clinical interest.

Stafford pursued the subject mentally. To the best of his knowledge, and from what he'd read, there hadn't been any "houses" *per se* in Chicago since shortly after the repeal of the Volstead Act. The two illegal activities, bootlegging and commercialized vice, at least on a large scale, had seemed to be closely allied. Still, he couldn't help but wonder if organized and segregated prostitution might not be at least a partial answer to the growing problem of immorality and promiscuity among the current younger generation.

He'd always been an inveterate reader. And if history was any guide to the present, since the beginning of recorded history, in all societies, there'd always been a certain number of girls and young women who, for one reason or another, had preferred to prostitute their bodies rather than seek other employment. As the old saying went, the rigid male organ has no conscience. It could be if there had been an established red-light district where, for a set fee, the four youths who had assaulted Miss Daly could have had their sexual needs taken care of, the incident wouldn't have happened.

Stafford considered and rejected the premise. The thing had gone too far for that. It was much too complicated. Virginity and chastity had become archaic words. On the broad spectrum, it was Miss Daly and not the boys who had been out of step. Theoretically, she should have welcomed and have been pleased by their attentions.

As far as he could tell, the nation, the entire Western world for that matter, was rapidly slipping into a pseudo-oriental culture of phallus worship. In literature, in art, in modern dancing, even in music, the great god Sex had taken over.

No matter her color or her creed or her ethnic background, or the strata of society into which she was born,

the day that a modern girl child opened her eyes her life was slanted toward one end. In the nursery toys with which she played, at the boy and girl parties she attended while she was still in her pre-teens, in the music to which she listened and to which she danced, in the books and the magazines she read, in the movies and in the television programs she watched, she was constantly, subliminally, and openly indoctrinated with the theory that, for a girl or a woman to obtain the most out of life, to be really popular and successful, only one thing really mattered and that was for her to be a willing and good bed partner.

Conversely, when they weren't engaged in active violence merely for the sake of being destructive, or protesting the imagined withholding of some special privilege they arbitrarily assumed to be their God-given right, the chief ambitions of most young males seemed to be to unzip their zippers and use what nature had given them to assist their feminine counterparts achieve both success and popularity.

Against that type of sanctioned and subsidized competition, plus the pickups in bars and on street corners, and professional mothers anxious to add to their relief checks and Aid to Dependent Children allotments, and the normal quota of nymphos born to every generation, even a two-dollar parlor house of the type that had once flourished would be hard put to pay their laundry bill.

There was still a police guard at the building and a number of private cars with press stickers on their windshields parked at the curb, but the bulk of the reporters and the cameramen was gone.

Since Stafford had left to go to the store, the guard on the front door had been changed and the uniformed officer who had taken over insisted on seeing his identification before allowing him to enter the building.

"Stafford, eh?" a Johnny-come-lately reporter standing beside the officer said. "I've heard that name before." He added hopefully, "You weren't one of the tenants who broke down the door of the apartment where the schoolteacher was being raped, were you, mister?"

"No," the folk singer admitted. He started to add that he and his wife, Rita, had been rehearsing a number when they'd heard Miss Daly appeal for help, and thought better

of the idea. If he said even that much the reporter was certain to ask why he hadn't gone to her aid. And a bad press was worse than none.

Sighing, Stafford walked into the cool hall and climbed the metal stairs to his apartment.

At some time or another in his life he'd read that the four saddest words of tongue or pen were, "*It might have been.*"

He believed it.

And most of the might-have-beens with which he was familiar began with the two-letter word "if." *If* the hare hadn't stopped to take a nap, he could easily have beaten the tortoise. *If* Marc Antony hadn't expended so much of his energy in banging Cleopatra, he'd probably have beaten the pants off Octavius Caesar. *If* the dog hadn't stopped to relieve himself, he, undoubtedly, would have caught the rabbit. *If* Eve hadn't become bored and invented sex, no cherub with a flaming sword would have chased man out of the Garden. *If* he hadn't listened to Rita, they could be set by now. They could be in like Flynn.

Stafford mimicked his wife's voice as he climbed the stairs:

"Now don't you dare go over there, Jack, and maybe get in a fight. You know as well as I do, even if her father is a preacher, she's nothing but a little tramp. So she screamed and called for help. Nothing can possibly happen to her that hasn't happened before. Besides we're moving out of the building Tuesday morning and whatever may be going on in 303 isn't any of our business. I don't think we ought to become involved."

That was what Rita had said. That was what his beloved doe-eyed wife had thought. And like a damn fool he'd listened to her. He'd let a shyster Polish lawyer, a fat Jewish literary agent, a refugee Cuban grease ball, and a broken-down old carny, none of whom needed or particularly wanted it, garner all of the free publicity that could have been his and Rita's.

And now Rita was angry with him for having listened to her.

With every priest and Bible-thumper and rabbi in the country, and every editorial writer decrying the growing hesitancy of the general public to go to the assistance of a fellow brother or sister in need, if he'd just gone over and

banged on the door and demanded to know what the hell was going on, Miss Daly's getting herself raped could have made them. He could have become the Sir Galahad of the 16-Ton and guitar-strumming set.

This thing was a public-relation man's dream. Milked properly by a man who knew his business, the multiple assault on the schoolteacher could have been built into a gold mine. He and Rita could have had their names on every front page and news wire service in the country. With followup interviews in *Life* and *Time* and *Newsweek*, and *Playboy* and *Esquire* and *Down Beat*. Plus well-paid guest appearances on all of the better radio and television programs.

They could have been the biggest thing in folk music. By now their phone could be ringing with offers from all over the country. With their name as big in the public eye as it could have been, they might even have been asked to appear on *The Ed Sullivan Show* or *The Bell Telephone Hour*.

All he'd had to do was walk around the hall and knock on the door of 303 and ask what was going on.

Stafford walked down his own side of the third-floor hall and opened his door and threaded a course between the packed barrels and cartons in the living room to the kitchen. It was as cluttered as the living room but Rita had cleared a small space, large enough for them to eat on, on the kitchen table.

As Stafford opened the bag and set the loaf of bread and the butter and the can of peas and the carton of potato salad and the barbecued chicken and the bottle of Liebfraumilch in the cleared space, his wife turned away from the window and scowled at the bottle of wine.

"Big deal," she said. "What are we celebrating?"

Stafford considered the question. "Well, I could be in jail."

"For doing what?"

"A number of things. When we found out that it was Miss Daly and not Terry who'd screamed for help, I could have broken my guitar over your head."

"All right!" Rita said hotly. "I was wrong. You didn't *have* to listen to me. What do you want me to do, put on a bikini and go down to the beach and lure four more young cruds back here and let them play house between *my* legs

so you can break down the door and rescue me?"

"It's an idea," Stafford said. "But before you do anything that drastic, I tell you what."

"What?"

"Would you mind seeing if you can find the can opener and a pan to heat these peas in?" He picked up the bottle of wine. "Also some paper cups and the corkscrew."

CHAPTER 19

Visiting hours will be from 2 P.M. to 4 P.M. and from 7 P.M. to 9 P.M. The only persons excepted from this rule are priests, rabbis, ordained ministers of their faith, and local police officers who are working on a case involving one or more patients. . . .

HOSPITAL AUTHORITY

Rogers was relieved when nine o'clock came and, after numerous attempts, the night supervisor in charge of the floor succeeded in convincing his family and Detective and gazelle-eyed Mrs. Brotz he would live until morning, and if there was any change in his condition they would be notified, but in either event visiting hours were over and they would have to leave.

With their being as vocal as they were about it, the emotional instability of his immediate family always embarrassed him. Now with a slight variation, Detective and Mrs. Brotz were well on their way to joining the same category. The detective and his wife had been waiting when they'd brought him down from surgery the night before. Mrs. Brotz had been in the hospital all day. And Brotz had joined in her vigil as soon as he'd completed his tour of duty.

The only difference between his family and Detective and Mrs. Brotz was that they weren't vocal. They just sat or stood and looked at him with the moist, grateful eyes of a pair of aging cocker spaniels who'd just been rescued from the lethal chamber of the Cook County Dog Pound.

It was nice to be alone again. All through the long, hot holiday afternoon, and even longer evening, weak as he still was, with a pair of plastic tubes thrust up his nose, another drain in his side, an I.V. needle taped to one arm, and wearing only a ridiculously short hospital gown that barely

covered his John Henry, he'd felt as if he had been on exhibition.

While hospital regulations, even for a private room, forbade more than two visitors at one time, and the nurse had been able to enforce that dictum, the two chairs in his room had been occupied continuously while four or more pairs of eyes, at various heights from the floor, had admired him from the corridor through the partially opened door.

This with his father and mother, his mother still speaking broken English, with frequent lapses into Yiddish, sixty-five years after she'd been born in the country, his brothers and their shrill-voiced wives, and their even more shrill-voiced offspring informing each other and all passers by how brave their son, their brother, their brother-in-law, their Uncle Leo was. With Detective and Mrs. Brotz beaming silent agreement.

Now he was Leo the hero.

When all he'd done was clip a punk a couple of judo chops to keep him from sticking a knife into Brotz' back. If he'd been in training, if he'd had a little less flab and had been a bit quicker on his feet, the chances were he wouldn't even have gotten knicked.

As Rogers lay grateful for the cool night breeze blowing in through the hospital window, he was struck by a totally irrelevant thought. If this had happened in Korea during combat, his platoon sergeant would probably have eaten out his tail for allowing himself to come so close to being killed. It had been the sergeant's often profanely expressed belief that it wasn't a soldier's duty to die for his country. He was being paid to make certain that the enemy died for theirs.

During some research he'd done for a story he'd written, he'd come across the interesting statistical fact that, even in this age of space capsules orbiting the earth, Chicago was still the largest rail center in the United States, if not in the entire world. The item he'd read had stated that the city was served by 21 interstate railroads and 15 switching and belt lines.

Lying here in the semi-dark of his room, he believed it. As the three-day holiday ended and hundreds of thousands of families and couples, tired and sunburned and sleepy, fought their way back into the city, there was a constant

hum of vehicular traffic on the streets and boulevards and elevated expressways.

But separate and distinct, over the surge of traffic, he could hear the far-off, rather lonely-sounding whistle of at least three trains, outbound for Boston or New York, or Omaha or Kansas City, or Louisville or Memphis.

Closer by, he could hear the puffing and the busy snorting of a belt-line yard hog, then the sudden hiss of steam and applied sand brakes and the metallic clang of coupling bars as the switching crew shunted their complement of loaded boxcars and gondolas onto some commercial siding.

It was a solid, reassuring sound. Rogers doubted if trains would ever become completely outmoded. Barbershop quartettes and steam buffs would still be singing about brave Casey Jones and the two locomotives that were going to bump when men were buying commuters' tickets to the moon.

Possibly because trains represented an era. They were a pleasant reminder of a probably inequitable but much more understandable way of life. An era of nonconfiscatory taxes, and no foreign ideologies, or surfaced race problems, or great societies, or H-bombs, or fifty-cent ten-cent hotdogs.

In the days when the web of steel rails had first linked, then united the continent, life had been so much simpler. You were rich or you were poor. You were white or you were black. You were a Jew or a Christian. You were a Catholic or a Protestant or a Mormon. But whatever you were, you stood or fell on your own.

You'd take a girl to a dance, or for a buggy ride, and when you got her home she either did or she didn't. If she did and you got her pregnant, you married her. Either way the intimate relationship between the sexes had been a personal matter, not discussion for an analyst's couch, a Madison Avenue advertising layout, or the theme of a best-selling novel or supercolossal motion picture. Sex had been something you practiced in private. With a girl who happened to love or like you, wanted to be laid, or who was willing to participate in the exercise for a stipulated fee.

Sex was nothing new. The Bible, the Talmud, the *Thousand One Nights*, Rabelais, Baudelaire, all of the great literature of the ages, were filled with incidents of licit and

illicit sex, of true marital love and rapine and sadism and whoredom and perversion. Even the Pilgrims and the Puritans had been good at it. They'd had to be to survive the Indians and the inclement weather and lay the foundation for a nation of one hundred and eighty million people.

In Rogers' opinion, however, the current generation had handled the matter rather badly. Every magazine rack was filled with colored illustrations of nude, or nearly nude, curvaceous beauties, young married women and single girls who presumably would be affronted if a strange male cupped one of their titties or ran his hand up between their legs, shopped in supermarkets and lolled on beaches with everything but their nipples and their vaginal orifice showing. Pretty little bitches like the Jones kid waggled their equally pretty little behinds up one street and down another, reveling in the male reactions they evoked. Then when a quartette of punks like Harry and Solly and Joe Joe and Frankie reacted to the stimuli, Mr. and Mrs. John Q. Public were horrified.

Rogers shifted his position on the bed. He wasn't excusing what had happened to Miss Daly. There was no excuse for rape. But times, not people, changed. There had always been weaklings and misfits. There'd always been good guys and bad ones and, more important, a certain percentage of men and women concerned with the welfare of their fellow human beings.

The people in the building were proof of that. After what had happened the afternoon before, he couldn't help but feel a sharp sense of personal loss for not having tried to get to know his fellow tenants. It could be he wasn't looking in the right places for his source material.

Mrs. Mason was a good example. When he'd thought of her at all, he'd been annoyed by the fact she kept an almost microscopic check on his own and the other tenants' arrivals and departures. Now it transpired that knowing what was going on, who was and who wasn't in the building, was a conditioned reflex, that in her day Mrs. Mason had probably known and serviced more political and underworld bigshots than all the elected mayors of Chicago had laid cornerstones.

Frenchy LaTour was an equally colorful figure. In their own way, so were Señor Garcia and Adamowski. More im-

portant, all of them had proven to be men. After Señor Garcia had joined him and Adamowski in the foyer and LaTour had walked in the door, fresh from viewing the Memorial Day parade, and the situation had been explained to them, there'd been no hesitation.

"Well, let's go up and I'll knock again," the lawyer had said. "Then, if they don't open up, we'll break down the door."

"*Sí, señor,*" Señor Garcia had nodded.

"Right," LaTour had concurred. "But if they're hopped up and one of them has a switchblade, I'd better stop off and pick up my son's gun. You never can tell what a junkie may do."

"*Sí.*"

No heroics. Matter of fact. Do you prefer your martini with or without a twist of lemon peel? And because he'd been there, and it had been the thing to do, he'd tagged along.

Still listening to the train whistles growing fainter by the moment, Rogers thought that the damndest things could happen to a man. God knew he hadn't started out to be a hero. Freshly showered and shaven when he'd first heard the scream, all he'd intended to do was dress and go get some supper, have a few drinks in some bar, and let the rest of the evening take care of itself.

Sensing motion in the room he turned his head, expecting to see one of the nurses, and saw Lieutenant Hanson standing beside his bed.

"How's it going, fellow?" the detective asked him.

"Not too bad," Rogers said. "I hurt a little. But after they got through sewing me up, I don't seem to leak anywhere. At least I can hold this stuff they're dripping into me. Don't tell me you're still on duty?"

"No," Hanson said. "I finished up several hours ago."

"How's that punk that LaTour shot?"

"Still critical."

"They don't know, eh?"

"Not yet."

"What happens to LaTour if he dies?"

"I wish I knew."

"And Miss Daly?"

"The floor supervisor says she's doing fine. When I leave

here, if she's still awake, I'm going to stop in and see her."

Rogers hesitated, asked, "Could I ask you a very personal question, Lieutenant?"

"Why not?"

"What happens if the punks got Miss Daly pregnant?"

Hanson deliberated his answer, then said quietly, "This is between us, of course. Strictly off the record. But that's something we'll never know." He added, "And neither will she. It seems when our man brought her in last night he called a high-level council with the heads of staff. And it was decided that under the circumstances, while she was still in a state of semishock, it might be wise to do everything that could be done to protect the current and future state of her physical and mental health. As a therapeutic measure."

"Of course," Rogers said. He didn't pursue the subject. "But what will the law do to the boys?"

"You have me there," Hanson admitted. "In the first place, all of them are juveniles. In the second place, to hear their parents talk, all of them have wings instead of shoulderblades and anything they may have done, including sticking that knife into you, was just a youthful prank. Then, if that isn't enough, while I last talked to Miss Daly early this afternoon, she still insisted she won't sign a statement or appear before a grand jury, or even identify the boys."

"Because of the resulting publicity?"

"That and her job."

"She has a point."

"A good one."

"And you've come back to talk to her again?"

"N-no," Hanson said. "At least not about that. As with dropping in on you, it's purely a personal call." He was amused. "I imagine Herman and Adele have dropped around to see you."

"Dropped around?" Rogers said wryly. "Everytime I look up I see her. And I guess Brotz must have joined her as soon as he finished his tour."

Hanson grinned. "They feel pretty strong about you. Right now you could run for any office you name and be sure of at least two votes. Because if it hadn't been for you, instead of hanging around here all day, Adele would have been standing in some funeral parlor watching visitors sign

the memory book and listening to the in-laws who have freeloaded off Herman for years saying, 'I told you what would happen if you married a cop.'" Hanson sobered. "With Herman with less than two months to go. I don't know why, but it always seems to happen that way." His smile returned. "Not that Herman doesn't drive me nuts at times. Like when you make a statement about almost anything, he never completely agrees or disagrees with you. All he ever says is, 'Oh, I don't know.' But I'm going to miss them both. Just watching them together makes me feel good. I guess you might say they restore my faith in people."

"In what way?"

Lieutenant Hanson pondered the question. "It's difficult to explain. But when you're in the line of work I'm in, outside of your social contacts, and you don't have time for many of them, three fourths of the women you meet are hookers, or broads, or married cheaters, women who have degraded or commercialized their sex in one way or another. And it's the same with the men. Most of them are thieves or junkies or pimps or freewheeling studs. And sometimes you get to thinking the whole world is so rotten it might be a good idea if someone would drop a bomb."

Hanson continued, "Then you see a couple like Adele and Herman. They've been married even longer than Herman has been on the Force. But every time that Adele looks at him, her face still lights up like a neon sign. She doesn't care that he doesn't look like Cary Grant, or has a pot, or that he's never made much money, or that now that he is retiring they're going to have to live on a damn sight less. All she ever sees is him. And it's the same way with Herman. Sure. If we happen to cruise past some babe on the street, he'll look at a cute little heinie and maybe think how nice it would be. That's the way men are. But you put the best-looking tart in the world in one bedroom and his wife in the other, and he had to make a choice, the guy wouldn't even hesitate."

"They're lucky," Rogers said.

Hanson transferred his straw hat from one hand to the other. "Well, I just wanted to see how you were doing. And the doc tells me fine, barring complications." He added soberly, "Also to say it would make our jobs a lot easier if there were more men like you. You did a good job in dis-

arming that punk. And if you hadn't done what you did, Herman would probably be dead." He laid his hand on Rogers' arm. "So, thanks, fellow. And that's from me and all of the boys."

After the detective had gone, Rogers lay savoring the pleasant taste in his mouth.

His brothers and his sisters-in-law, and his nieces and his nephews had talked for hours about how brave he'd been. His mother had buttonholed everyone who'd passed the door to tell them what a hero her boy, Leo, was. Even several of the reporters had pinned bouquets on him. But this one had come from a pro. Hanson thought he had done a good job.

Through no choice of his own he'd been forced into a small example of what it might have been like if he had been sent into combat. True, in his case, the enemy had been a teenager. But the youth was as tall and as heavy as he was. And as hopped up as he had been, and as terrified of being forced to pay for his part in the assault on Miss Daly, Joe Joe had put up a hell of a fight. He'd been frightened every second of the time he'd grappled the punk for the knife.

But he'd hung on. He'd done what had to be done. If that was brave, he'd been brave. And coming from a man like Lieutenant Hanson, a "Thanks, fellow" should be the equivalent of at least a Bronze Star.

One down and one to go. Now all he had to do was write a best seller. Rogers compromised. At least a salable book whose first hard-cover printing would pay out the publisher's advance.

Surely that wasn't too much to ask.

CHAPTER 20

Now that the heavy sedation she'd been under almost constantly since early evening on the night before was wearing off, and Ann and Cora had gone, and, as trite and as much of a cliché as it might be, she'd had time to take a long, hard look at herself and the sister members of her sex, Mary Daly decided that most women were bitches.

No one could possibly have been "sweeter" than Cora and Ann had been. As soon as they'd returned from the Dunes and had learned what had happened, they'd rushed to the hospital.

"Wasn't it a *pity* that such a horrible thing had happened to her?" . . . "Now didn't she wish she'd come to the Dunes with them?" . . . "*They'd* had a perfectly divine time." . . . "But she wasn't to *worry* about a thing."

Ann would phone the Substitute Center in the morning and arrange for someone to take over her classes. She would also phone her principal and inform him that she was ill and her doctor had advised her not to resume teaching for the balance of the school year.

Cora would do what packing had to be done, and both of them would spend as much time as was necessary to locate a new apartment for her. And, of course, if any of their mutual friends should suspect and hint that she was the unnamed "tenant next door" and "very attractive twenty-six-year-old female employee of the Chicago Board of Education," as she was referred to in the newspaper stories, they would naturally deny it.

Mary felt for the open package of cigarettes on the metal night stand beside the bed and put one in her mouth, then discovered that, intentionally or not, the nurse hadn't left either a package of matches or her lighter.

She felt for the call button pinned to her pillow but re-

frained from pushing it as her mind continued to explore the avenues that Ann and Cora had opened.

Why *naturally* deny it? Why the rush to find her a new apartment? Why shouldn't she finish the school year? She hadn't done anything wrong. She hadn't *wanted* to be raped. Nor was it likely, she thought wryly, that once her contusions had disappeared and her lacerations had healed, there would be any further complications. She doubted very much that even if her rather substantial savings should run out she would have to enter a charity home for unwed mothers.

Before they'd left the building the night before, the police surgeon had mentioned a Friedman and, possibly, an Aschheim-Zondek. Both were pregnancy tests. But the subject hadn't been mentioned again. And, deducing from the delightfully cool, almost antiseptically sterile feel of her more intimate parts, and from the way they'd been packed when she'd come out from under the anesthesia, she had a fair idea that the possibility the boys had gotten her *enceinte* had been taken care of.

And if the next time she went to confession, Father Xavier didn't approve, he could take it up with the Pope. That would have been one indignity too many.

Mary lay picking excerpts from her recent conversation with the two teachers with whom she shared an apartment. Cora had been particularly aghast.

"But, Mary," she'd protested. "You don't mean you went next door wearing nothing but your wrapper? Without even a bra or a pair of panties under it?"

Why not? It had been a hot day. She'd done it a dozen times before. She hadn't expected to find anyone but Terry. Terry wasn't interested in what she wore or didn't wear.

Then there had been Ann's delicately phrased, "But, Mary, dear. Before they, well, possessed you for the first time, before they dragged you into Terry's bedroom and two of the boys held you while a third assaulted you, couldn't you scream even *once* before they put that awful tape over your mouth?"

Surprise? Concern? Shocked sensibilities? This when she knew that Cora had been married and divorced in her teens and was currently having a torrid affair with a lesbian biology teacher and Ann was permitting her businessman fiancé at least partial premarital privileges?

She didn't blame either for anything they'd done or might currently be doing. They were both mature young women. What they did or didn't do on their own time, as long as they did it discreetly, was their own business. There was nothing in the Board of Education rules that said a teacher, male or female, had to be different from the general run of humans. The only thing to which the Board objected was getting your name in the paper in such a way as to bring discredit on the entire teaching profession.

It was Cora and Ann's genteel hypocrisy that infuriated her. If she'd known that there were four drunken young animals in the adjoining apartment, she wouldn't have gone in, with or without panties and a bra. She'd have phoned for the police. If she could have screamed, she would have screamed. As it was, when she'd finally succeeded in getting to the door it had been another four or five minutes, and a final session with Frankie, before help arrived.

Now that her head was clearing and she'd had time to think, as sweet and considerate and as genuinely willing to be helpful as Cora and Ann had tried to be, she sensed a feeling on their part that if she had really wanted to she could have prevented the assault, that consciously or subconsciously she had invited what had happened. That and a morbid curiosity about the physical aspect of the business and her physical reaction to it.

What Cora and Ann had really wanted to know were the intimate, personal details. How she'd reacted mentally and physically to the loss of her virginity . . . if the boys' virile members had been man-sized . . . if two of them had held her everytime a third had mounted her . . . how many times they'd abused her . . . had the prolonged stimulation of her genitalia caused her to experience a climactic?

Mary rolled the unlighted cigarette she was holding between her fingers. They were all questions she could have answered very easily.

At first the physical pain of being deflowered by force had vied with embarrassment and shame over what was happening. That and a deep sense of personal loss. Either Cora or Ann was a much better judge of the size of virile members. After all, she had no measure of comparison. No. After all four of the boys had assaulted her the first time, they hadn't bothered to hold her. They'd kept her in line by punching

her with their fists every time she'd tried to twist away from one of them. That and her fear of Joe Joe's knife. She'd lost track of the number of times the boys had been intimate with her. All she knew was that it had gone on almost continuously for two hours.

The corners of her mouth turned down. And the answer to their last unspoken question would have had to be in the affirmative. While she wasn't proud of the fact, just as old Mr. LaTour had burst into the bedroom, the young animal belaboring her body had finally succeeded in his psychotic determination to make her respond to him.

It hadn't been from any desire or willingness on her part. She'd fought it as long as she could. But, as she'd learned in one of the various courses in abnormal psychology she'd taken, from a purely mechanistic aspect, sexual satisfaction or gratification wasn't always directly concerned with the object employed. While the mechanism presented certain interesting variations, insofar as the general principle was concerned, and except for possible differences in the degree of pleasure obtained, sex was independent of quality or moral value. It was also independent of the method or the partner, or partners, employed for setting it in motion. More, it could function just as well without a partner, as in self-abuse or with any kind of partner, as in homosexuality or rape.

And when Mr. LaTour had burst in on them, powerless to help herself, no longer able to damn the torrent that had been building up in her, whimpering in her torment, she had been thrusting back as avidly as her tormentor had been thrusting at her. Then, even as the terrified youth had attempted to scramble for safety, with the room filled with gunfire and the whine of ricocheting bullets, unable to stop the chain of progression that had been set into motion, her splayed thighs and abruptly vacated body had continued to thrust and jerk spasmodically in the first male-organ-induced orgasm that she had ever experienced.

At the moment, before the red glow of unreasoning passion had faded and reason had reasserted itself, she hadn't felt raped. She'd felt cheated.

And just how did you explain that to a priest? Or, for that matter, to a grand jury, or to a police court of a juvenile-court judge?

She'd promised herself she wouldn't cry anymore. She despised women who cried. She closed her eyes and wept, only to open them again and look up sullenly as she sensed motion in the room, and a male voice, surprisingly gentle, materialized in the semidarkness beside her high hospital bed.

"Bawling about it isn't going to do a bit of good. It's over and done with. Let it go." Lieutenant Hanson continued matter-of-factly, "I tell you what. Why don't you take this piece of tissue and wipe your eyes? Then I'll give you a fresh cigarette. That one you're shredding looks sort of beat."

Mary accepted the tissue and wiped her eyes. Then, after reaching out and switching on the small lamp on the stand, she fluffed her pillow against the headboard and sat, still sullen-eyed, looking at Lieutenant Hanson over the wisps of smoke rising from the lighted cigarette he put between her lips.

Seemingly this nightmare she'd gotten herself into wasn't ever going to end. Yesterday she'd been a free agent, a twenty-six-year-old reluctant virgin whose nude, inviolate body had never been seen by any man. Four dirty little punks had taken care of the inviolate part. And since then only God knew how many men had viewed her. Mary enumerated them mentally. Certainly old Mr. LaTour and Señor Garcia and Mr. Rogers and Mr. Adamowski. And Lieutenant Hanson and his squad. Then after a police surgeon, in the line of duty to be sure, had probed and prodded and examined her and they had brought her here, again only God knew how many other doctors and residents and interns, doing only God knew what to her, had viewed the real Mary Daly.

She waited for Hanson to speak. When he didn't, she said coldly, "I told you this afternoon that I absolutely refuse to sign anything, appear anywhere, or identify anyone."

"So you said," Hanson said.

"Then what are you doing here?"

"Let's just say I happened to be in the building."

Mary picked her wristwatch from the stand. "At eleven o'clock at night?"

Hanson put a cigarette in his mouth and lit it. "I don't require much sleep." He confided, "In fact you sort of get

out of the habit once you're on the Force. Especially if you're lucky enough to make lieutenant and are bucking for captain."

"I see," Mary said. "And I suppose that after all the publicity in the newspapers it would mean a lot to you if you could put Frankie and Solly and Joe Joe and Harry away."

The big detective enjoyed his cigarette. "Not particularly. If they were adults, yes. Being juveniles, it doesn't make much difference one way or another. You see, this is all very new to you, Miss Daly. But we pick up nasty little punks like them for identical, or similar, offenses seven days a week, three hundred and sixty-five days a year."

He filled his lungs with smoke and exhaled slowly. "It can even be you're right in not wanting to appear or testify against them. Right now the only thing they'd really understand is having their teeth kicked in. Unfortunately, that happens to be against the law. I would lose my shield if I so much as clipped one. Besides, as you pointed out last night, by the time some bleeding-heart lawyer finished his summation to a jury, they being just playful little boys and you a mature woman, he'd probably convince the jurors that you enticed them into being intimate with you."

Mary hadn't thought she could ever blush again. "I don't remember saying that."

Hanson continued casually, "You were pretty wound up. You'd also been through a very nasty experience. But don't worry about having to appear against them. I've been talking to the juvenile officers and, what with a breaking and entering charge, an attempted assault on a police officer with a deadly weapon, and Joe Joe knifing Mr. Rogers, the juvenile men tell me they should have enough to put them away for a few years."

"And then?"

Hanson was candid about it. "The next time we pick them up on a similar charge, there won't be any nonsense about it. We'll send the bastards where they belong. To the electric chair. The only thing wrong with that is some other girl or young woman will probably have to go through the same thing they put you through. And she may not be so lucky. They may kill her."

"You may be right," Mary said. "But I won't testify

against them. I can't." She tried to change the subject. "Have you located Terry?"

"Not yet." Hanson wasn't complaining. He was merely stating a fact. "I don't know why, but these things involving juveniles always happen on a weekend or a holiday, when the schools are closed. And while it can be that Miss Jones is spending the weekend with some girl friend, so far we haven't been able to contact anyone who even knows the kid. Hanson amended the statement. "Except one boy whose name we found in her apartment." He took his notebook from his pocket and turned to the last entry in it. "A Paul Szabados. Did you ever hear her mention him?"

"Yes. Paul is her regular boyfriend. I believe they have been going steady for some months."

"Well, we talked to him on the phone, but while he admitted he knew Terry and they'd dated, he claimed he hadn't the least idea where she was. And didn't care." Hanson returned the notebook to his pocket. "In fact he was quite emphatic about it."

"And you left it there?"

"For the time being. But if Terry doesn't show up, we'll drive out to the school tomorrow and have a talk with Paul."

"Do you think the boys harmed her?"

"They claim not. And that much of their story sounds reasonable. It doesn't seem logical that they would have gone to the apartment to wait for her if they didn't expect her to show up."

"No, it doesn't."

Hanson snuffed his cigarette in the tray on the night stand. "Well, I'll be running along and let you get some sleep. But there is something I'd like to ask you before I leave."

"What?" Mary said warily.

"Do you remember when Frenchy introduced us on the stairs?"

"I remember the incident very well."

"What was your opinion of me?"

"That's a strange question to ask. Particularly at this time."

"I realize that. But I'd still like to know."

"I thought you were nice. In fact I stayed home nights

for several weeks, hoping you might phone and ask me for a date."

Hanson nodded. "Good. That fits in with what you said last night."

"I seem to have said a lot of things last night."

Hanson repeated what he said a few minutes previously. "You were pretty wound up. Living in the type of civilization we do, a civilization that makes a fetish of personal pride, usually men and women aren't very honest with each other. But last night you were sedated just heavily enough to speak your mind."

"What are you getting at?"

"First, tell me this. Do you remember telling me why you didn't want to testify against the boys?"

"Vaguely."

"You said it was because you didn't want to lose your job along with your virginity. And even if you didn't lose your job, you couldn't stand the thought of walking into a classroom with all the girls in it knowing what had happened to you. And with all of the boys wondering," Hanson phrased it as delicately as he could, "well, shall we say how affectionate you were when you were in bed with a man. Then you looked at me and you said, 'And that was so easily ascertainable. As one city employee to another, I think you ought to know that. As Mr. LaTour might say, all it would have cost you was a dime, the tenth part of a dollar. One lousy little thin dime . . . and a license. I wouldn't even have insisted on a priest.'"

"So?" Mary asked defiantly.

"So," Hanson said, "while I realize that my timing couldn't be worse and this is one hell of a time to bring up that particular subject, I thought that you might be interested in my opinion of you, what I told Frenchy after he'd introduced us. Are you interested?"

"'Curious' would be a better word."

"Well, he'd invited me up for a few drinks and to meet his son's widow. With the idea of pairing us off, I imagine. But while young Mrs. LaTour was very polite and very pretty and very intelligent, we didn't do a thing for each other. We were just a man and a woman making small talk, being pleasant to each other for Frenchy's sake, with her mind a million miles away and me looking at my watch,

wondering how soon I could make my break without being impolite. Then when I did leave and Frenchy walked me down the stairs, there you were. And I had an entirely different reaction. I liked the way you looked and talked and smelled. I wanted to take you in my arms right there and hold and kiss you and tell you how wonderful you were. Then I wanted to take you to your apartment or mine and strip off the clothes hiding your beautiful body and go to bed with you and do everything that's possible for a man and a woman who are attracted to each other to do."

Hanson paused, then continued, "But because in this cockeyed world we live in, this phoney world of man-made taboos, you don't act that way with strangers. They send you to a funny farm if you do. I didn't do any of those things. All I did was mumble a polite, 'I'm pleased to meet you, Miss Daly,' or something like that. But after you'd walked on up the stairs, with me watching and wanting you every step of the way, I did tell Frenchy, 'Now there's my kind of a girl. If I ever got my big Swedish hands on her, I'd keep her barefoot and pregnant. And you know something? I have a hunch she'd like that.' "

Mary's voice was barely audible as she asked, "If you felt that way, why didn't you follow up the introduction? Why didn't you spend that dime?"

"I meant to," Hanson said simply. "But something or other broke and we got extra busy around then, and what with working a full tour every day and going to law school five nights a week, I just never got around to it. Night after night I'd tell myself, I must call that girl. But I never did."

Her voice still small, Mary said, "And now?"

"Well, now that we've met again, I thought maybe we could work out something."

It was an unfortunate choice of words. "I see," Mary said coldly. "Now that I've been broken in and you've seen me stripped and know what I have to offer, and you don't have to worry about the social amenities, you want to rectify your failure to go through the usual channels and move right in on me?"

"You could put it that way," Hanson admitted. He thrust his hand in his trousers' pocket and brought out his change and laid a dime on the night stand. "So why don't we leave it like this? I'll have to see and talk to you probably a dozen

more times before we wrap up this case. But, seeing that I didn't make the call I should have made, when you feel you want to see me socially, you drop the dime in the slot and call me."

Mary brushed the coin to the floor with an angry sweep of her hand. "That will be the day! Now take your dirty filthy male ego with you and get the hell out of my room."

"Whatever you say, Mary," Hanson said. He walked to the door of the room and turned in the doorway. "Oh, yes. I almost forgot. Father Xavier sends his best. And he said for me to tell you he knows that none of this was your fault and that both he and God still love you. Also that he will be up in the morning to see you."

"Father Xavier?" Mary puzzled. "From St. Agnes?"

Hanson fitted his hat to his head. "Why so surprised? He's your parish priest, isn't he?"

"Yes. But—"

"And a nice guy. The Department has done business with him for years. When one of his flock starts to get out of line, he calls us. And when one of them has already gotten out of line, we call him. I've known him since I've been on the Force. But tonight was the first time the Father and I ever met on what could be called nondepartmental business."

Mary continued to be puzzled. "I don't understand. What personal business could you possibly have with Father Xavier? What have you two in common?"

"You," Hanson grinned.

"Me?"

"That's right."

"What are you talking about?"

Hanson pushed his hat on the back of his head and lit a fat cigar in place of one of the cigarettes he normally smoked. "Well, I'll tell you. It's like this, Miss Daly. Along with all of the other inhibitions you released last night, you stressed the fact that to get to know you better all I would have to do was buy a marriage license, that you wouldn't even have insisted on being married by a priest. Am I right so far?"

"Y-yes," Mary admitted.

Hanson continued, "Which means, of course, you being a good Catholic, you would really rather be married in your

own church, that you wouldn't really feel married unless you were. Considering what you have to offer any man, I think you have that much coming. So, after seeing you again this afternoon and making certain I felt the way I thought I felt about you, when I signed out tonight I drove over to St. Agnes and discussed the situation with Father Xavier. And the way he and I have things figured out, he should be able to instruct me in the things I need to know to be received into your church about the same time that you will be able to look at a man again with anything but horror in your eyes.

"So the way it boils down, we all get what we want. I get you. You get married in your church. Father Xavier gets a half-assed Catholic in place of a half-assed Lutheran, and, of course, any children we may have." Hanson studied the glowing tip of his cigar. "Not that the Father seemed to consider it too bad a deal. He gave me this when I left. And so far it hasn't exploded."

Mary leaned away from the pillow and sat with her hands folded primly in her lap. "You mean that after what happened to me yesterday you still think enough of me to want to marry me, that you're even willing to change your church?"

Hanson returned to the side of the bed. "Let's kill that first snake first. Just what did happen yesterday? With the best of motives you walked into a situation over which you had no control and for two hours you were subjected to a series of abuse and indignities no woman should be forced to experience. Possibly, however much against your will it may have been, our bodies being what they are, to add to your feeling of shame and of at least partial participation, you even experienced a small taste of what it would be like to be loved by a real man."

Hanson lifted a wisp of hair away from her forehead. "I don't know. I'm never going to ask. However I do know from reading the medical report that, despite the sexual abuse to which you were subjected, no permanent physical damage was done and, as you must suspect, any possibility of the boys having gotten you pregnant has been rectified. So, unpleasant as the memory may be for both of us, there's nothing more we can do. It happened. It's over. And once this case, whatever the disposition of it may be, has gone

into the 'closed' file, neither you nor I are ever going to mention it again." Hanson picked one of the woman's fine-boned hands from her lap, his big hand dwarfing it. "Look, Mary. Almost everyone has to live with something. All right. We'll live with this. And if we really feel the way I think we do about each other, we should have so much together that in time we'll forget it ever happened."

Mary used his given name for the first time. "Whatever you say, Ejler."

"As for the church bit," Hanson continued, "let's put it this way. While Father Xavier would probably give me an argument, that's part of his job, this is the way I see that. I've never been a very religious man, but I do believe there is a God. And if there is a God, a God capable of creating all of the beautiful things that there are in this world, including women like you, it doesn't seem reasonable to me that he would care very much about the form of ritual to which we subscribe. In fact I don't think He cares a damn if a man is a Mormon, or a hard-shell Baptist, or a Lutheran, or a Jew, or Greek Orthodox, or a Black Muslim. Just so long as he tries to do the best he can. Okay?"

"Okay," Mary said.

Hanson squeezed her hand gently. As gently, he stooped and brushed her lips with his. "For now."

Then, trailing a thin plume of fragrant cigar smoke, he turned and left the room and strode purposefully down the hospital corridor toward the bank of elevators on the far side of the supervisor's desk.

There were nights when Miss Glenmore was certain the entire world was mad. Nor did the police, or patients involved in police cases, add to a floor supervisor's peace of mind.

Mr. Rogers in 902 was a good example. No sooner had she gotten rid of his admiring family and gotten him settled down for the night when Lieutenant Hanson had popped in again. And the last time the light in 902 had come on, what had the patient wanted?

His back rubbed? A glass of water? The bed pan? Another sleeping pill? No. Mr. Rogers wanted to know when she thought the doctor would allow him to rent a portable type-

writer? And, in the interim, would she please bring him a pad of note paper and some pencils?

The floor supervisor glowered at Lieutenant Hanson's back as he strode past her cubicle. And now that Lieutenant Hanson had talked to her again, for at least fifteen minutes this time, the young woman in 918 was undoubtedly having hysterics. She might have to give her a hypo. The instructions on Miss Daly's chart were clear. As was standard procedure after a curettage, she was to be kept as quiet and as immobile as possible.

There being no floor nurse available at the moment, Miss Glenmore got up from her desk and rustled down the corridor in her stiffly starched white uniform, pushed open the door of 918 and walked in, and had never been so shocked in all of her nursing career.

Not only was Miss Daly not in bed, she was kneeling on the floor. But not in prayer. Her short white hospital gown completely failing to cover her bare and upthrust and very attractive derriere, one extended arm sweeping the floor under the metal night stand, the patient in 918 seemed to be searching frantically for some dropped object.

Miss Glenmore visually checked the plane surface of the night stand. It contained all the objects it should. There was a glass of water, a drinking tube, the plastic bottle of rubbing lotion, a box of tissues, an ash tray, the package of cigarettes which Miss Daly had insisted she leave, but for which, as a precautionary measure, she hadn't left either lighter or matches.

The supervisor made her presence known by slapping her hands together smartly. "Now you get right back into bed, Miss Daly. What in the world do you think you are doing down there?"

Locating the object for which she was searching, the girl assumed a slightly more modest squatting position and smiled up at her beatifically. "It's all right, Miss Glenmore. I found it."

"Found what?" the supervisor demanded to know.

The girl seemed surprised that the other woman shouldn't know anything so obvious.

"Why, the tenth part of a dollar, Miss Glenmore. One thin, beautiful little dime."

CHAPTER 21

Lou hadn't drunk so much whiskey in years. She knew she should feel some slight glow, but all she felt was a growing regret that she'd gotten mixed up in this business. In the months passed, ever since he'd moved in with his daughter-in-law, she'd spent hours thinking how nice it would be to cut up old touches with Frenchy. Now, after spending an afternoon and an evening in his company, she couldn't remember when she'd been so bored.

Frenchy LaTour would always be a great guy in her book. He would always be the one man in the world who had ever done anything for her without expecting something in exchange.

There was, however, she decided, one hell of a lot of difference between a fourteen-year-old miner's daughter having an amorous interlude with a virile, good-looking carnival barker and a fifty-five-year-old woman and a sixty-four-year-old man attempting to recapture even the outer trappings of a romance that had never existed. She and Frenchy were just two people who'd once spent a week together.

Semiarticulate as they were, even Grecko and Riley were better conversationalists. If the old man told her once more about the archaic Memorial Day parade in which his French grandfather had ridden a white horse down Michigan Boulevard, and compared that parade to the one he'd seen the day before, she didn't know what she might do.

Lou studied the old man critically as he refilled their whiskey glasses. Frenchy was still a good-looking man. She missed the resonant tones she remembered, but even his throaty whisper had a certain charm. This morning when she'd gotten Harold out of bed, and presumably out of the bosom of his family, to insist he set bail for LaTour, she

presumed that in the back of her mind, now it seemed she wasn't going to Rome, she'd had some vague idea she and Frenchy could pick up where they'd left off.

But this wasn't the man she'd remembered. Onetime whore and madam she might be, but in the years since she'd given herself to Frenchy in Herrin she'd so far outgrown the man they no longer played ball in the same league. Being perfectly factual about it, Frenchy was no longer even mentally young. All he was was a onetime petty grifter living almost entirely in a past that in itself had only partially existed.

"Step in a little closer, folks. That's it. Crowd right in around me. Now I tell you what I'm going to do. . . ."

Only Frenchy had never done anything, at least anything really important. The high point of his life had been a carnival barker's platform. That and a vicarious part in the life of his now dead son. The old man *talked* about going back to work. He *talked* of getting a room in some theatrical hotel where he could be among his own kind. But all that was was talk. In reality he was quite content with his very proper and obviously adoring daughter-in-law. They belonged to and with each other. Both of them were living in a rose-colored dream world of once upon a time.

Lou picked a fleck of cigarette tobacco from her upper lip. Carrying her analysis still further, while it would never come out in any court of law, knowing how prodigiously the old man had spent his youth in at least one respect, she thought she knew why Frenchy had been so quick on the trigger when he had burst into the bedroom where the teenager had been actively engaged in being sexually intimate with Miss Daly. He'd been angry and outraged. He'd been defending the sanctity of womanhood. But his prime reaction had been jealousy. Or perhaps "envy" was a better word. He'd been an old man crying in his beer, envious of Frankie the Beard because the youth could actively perform an act and enjoy a relationship that had been relegated to his memories.

Lou was relieved when LaTour finally looked at his watch, a present from his daughter-in-law he'd told her at least a half dozen times, and remarked that it was after midnight and he'd better be getting on up to his own apartment as May always insisted that he get a full eight hours' sleep.

Lou walked to the door with him. "You do that, Frenchy. But don't think it hasn't been fun."

As they stood in the open doorway, for one brief moment the man she'd known showed through the bourbon and the years. "It has at that, hasn't it, Lou?" LaTour whispered huskily. "The times I've looked at you and asked myself, 'Now where did I know her? Why is her face so familiar?' And here it was you all the time." He wasn't boasting of anything he'd done. He was merely recalling a pleasant moment that had touched both of their lives. "Will you ever forget that night when I bucked the games on the show? And the next morning when I walked you home? And after I'd kissed you good night, you walked on into your father's house all loaded down with those damn kewpie dolls and blankets and hams and those big baskets of groceries?"

Impulsively, Lou cupped his face in her hands and kissed him. "No. I'll never forget. Not ever, Frenchy. Now you watch yourself on those stairs."

"I'll watch it," LaTour promised.

Lou stood in the open doorway looking after him until he had climbed the stairs and entered his daughter-in-law's apartment, then she closed her door and leaned against it.

The big living room smelled strangely familiar, as it had once smelled in the old days, of cigarette and cigar smoke and whiskey. Only the smell of age had been added. Life did cruel things to people. It was almost impossible to realize that there'd been a time in her life when the afternoon and the evening just passed would have been spent so differently.

She double-locked the front door and raised the windows to their safety catches, to air out the room while she prepared herself for bed. Then, walking into her bedroom, she undressed and stood for a long time viewing her nude body in one of the full-length mirrors on the wall.

She'd been fourteen when she met Frenchy. Because she'd matured early, and there'd been no other form of amusement, she'd been going with boys for two years. She'd come to Chicago that same year and she'd only been seventeen or eighteen when she had her own establishment.

That had been in 1927 or '28. Before and since then she'd serviced a lot of men. Several times, with nothing better to

do, she'd tried to figure out how many. It ran up into the thousands, but she'd never been able to arrive at an exact figure. When a girl had worked The Stockade and the Maple Leaf Inn and the syndicate house on 18th and Dearborn, averaging twenty to thirty men a shift, the simple arithmetic became complicated. Especially when two or three times a week orders had come down from the top to rush the customers through because there was an American Legion or some other convention in town and all of the visiting studs wanted to be able to boast when they returned home that they'd gotten laid in Chicago. If she remembered correctly, on her best night, working an eight-hour shift, even allowing for a half-hour coffee break, she'd turned sixty-four tricks.

Lou cupped her breasts, then ran her hands down her body. Looking back from the distance of years such a thing seemed incredible. Still, not more incredible than the old saws that all whores were frigid, or queer, or had hearts of gold. Some of it she liked. Some of it she hadn't. But she had saved her money. With her it had been a business. Now, years later, at fifty-five, she still had a rather nice figure. In fact she had a much nicer figure than a lot of old maids who'd never been laid.

She slipped a silk nightgown over her head and put on a white satin peignoir. Perhaps she ought to write a book and get Mr. Rogers to handle it for her. She found a pair of mules and stepped into them. Not because she needed the money. But now that it seemed almost certain that he had heard about his foster mother's wild and wicked past and she wasn't going to be invited to go to Rome and visit Pietro and Ninetta and her foster grandchildren, it seemed a shame to let the publicity go to waste.

If she ever did write a book, she could call it *The Lives and Loves of Lou Chandler*. Or, *How To Get Rich While Lying on Your Back*. It was certain to be a best seller. She knew a number of prominent business and professional men in Chicago, even a few who had gone to Washington, who would be very happy to buy out the entire first edition.

Lou realized she was a little drunk even to think of such a thing. Still, some people were born smart. They could paint pictures or play the piano or build apartment com-

plexes. Others were born with certain other skills. And, if you had a preference for gracious living, you did your best with what you had been given.

In her opinion, too much was made of sex. It was a perfectly normal appetite that had existed since the first time that Adam had banged Eve. Nor, as some smug prigs claimed, was it founded in dirty pictures or lurid movies. All it took to create desire was proximity. When you put a boy and a girl, or a man and a woman, together under favorable circumstances, if the boy or the man had his normal equipment, there was only one thing he wanted to do.

In her day, Lou thought, the business had been much better handled. If there had been a well-run house where the four punks who had raped Miss Daly could have gotten themselves taken care of for a nominal fee, it was odds on that the assault would never have taken place.

Nor, as was commonly assumed, had the majority of the girls in such places, at least in the houses in which she'd worked, been coerced into what they were doing. Most of them had been girls like herself, farm or small-town girls, or young widows, who'd gone on the turf voluntarily. Girls who had wanted a little more out of life than they could earn by clerking in a department store, or working in an office, or waiting on tables, or running an elevator.

She knew a number of girls with whom she'd worked who had married very well. Lou walked into the kitchen and poured milk in a pan and put the pan on the stove to heat. Then, too, having been a tart did have its fringe benefits. The Right Honorable Judge Harold Tyler Green had damn near dropped dead of a coronary occlusion when he'd heard her voice over the phone.

She hadn't spoken to or seen the man for thirty years, but he'd recognized her voice immediately.

"Hello, Harold. This is Lou."

Lou tried to suppress a giggle, but failed. That was all she'd had to say and His Honor had become so flustered and cooperative that Frenchy LaTour would have been admitted to bail if the old carnival man had shot down the entire State Supreme Court in cold blood.

Lou wasn't particularly proud of herself. It was the first time she'd done such a thing. It was, she supposed, a form of blackmail. But then Harold owed her something. In the

days when she'd known him, Harold had been a particularly nasty young man with some of the damndest ideas of what constituted a good time.

She poured the warm milk in a glass and opened a box of crackers and spread them with peanut butter. But all that was back of her now. She hadn't been instrumental in anything that had happened in the building. All she'd been doing was sitting in her own apartment minding her own business. And in the morning she would look for a new apartment and sink back into the anonymity that had been so rudely interrupted.

After all, what had happened to Miss Daly and Terry, or would happen to the four boys, wasn't any of her business. She was pleased, however, by the way that Mr. Adamowski and Señor Garcia and Mr. Rogers and Frenchy had reacted. There'd been at least a half dozen instances in the newspapers of some poor kid being brutally beaten up and raped, while a half dozen alleged men had stood by twiddling their thumbs. Thank God there were still a few real men in the world.

Lou started to carry the glass of milk and the crackers into her bedroom and remembered that the milkman came in the morning. She returned the milk and crackers to the sink and gathered up the empty bottles and unlocked and opened her service door—and saw Terry, smoke coiling up from the cigarette between her lips, sitting, disconsolate, on the back stairs.

"What the hell are you doing out there?" Lou asked her.

"Sitting," the blonde girl said.

Lou set the wire rack holding the milk bottles on the tile. "So I see. I suppose you know that every cop in town is looking for you."

"I know," Terry said. "I heard on my car radio. And when I started in the front way I saw a cop in the hall and that's why I'm sitting here." She added, "Besides those dirty little cruds stole my house keys and now I can't even get into my own apartment to pack my clothes."

"Oh," the older woman said, tentatively. "Then you're leaving us?"

"That's right."

"May I ask where you're going?"

Terry filled her lungs with smoke and exhaled. "I haven't

any idea. But in the morning when the banks open, I'm going to draw out what money I have and then just drive and drive and drive."

Lou studied the girl's face. The teenager had herself under control but hysteria wasn't far behind the brittle mask that she'd assumed. It showed in the slight tic that tugged at one corner of her mouth, the barely discernible tremblings of her fingers as she removed her cigarette from her mouth.

Terry added, "It doesn't matter where. All I know is that I want to be far gone from Chicago when my father gets here."

"You don't want to talk to him?"

"No. All I need now is for him to start praying over me."

Lou tried to think of something to say that wouldn't frighten the blonde girl away and noticed she'd changed her costume since she'd last seen her. "You weren't wearing that dress when you left here, were you, Terry?"

Terry shook her head. "I borrowed it from one of my girl friends."

"Was that where you spent last night? With her?"

"Yes."

"Then why did you come home now?"

The tic became more pronounced. "I told you. I want to get some of my clothes. Besides, my friend's mother and father came home from Benton Harbor about an hour ago. And they'd read all that stuff in the papers. And her mother said I was a bad influence and she would prefer that her daughter didn't associate with me."

Lou thought she'd read the particularly lurid news story to which the girl was referring. To keep her talking, she asked, "What stuff was this, honey?"

"You know," Terry said. "About what happened out there on the beach. What Solly, I think it was, told the juvenile officers when they asked him if they'd killed me to get my beach bag and my money and all those other things. And Solly said that, while Frankie the Beard had done it to me, neither he nor the other two boys had touched me. And that the last time they'd seen me I'd been running stark naked for my car."

"Yes," Lou said. "I remember reading that."

The blonde girl's control was crumbling fast. "But that

was only partially true. They were going to take turns. Just like it said in the paper they did with Miss Daly." She explained. "You see, Paul was late and I was all alone on the beach when they came down the stairs. And when they saw me they all squatted down around the blanket I was sitting on and started talking dirty and asking each other if they should show me a good time. When I begged them to go away, they wouldn't. Instead they said they'd beat me if I didn't let them. And because they were drunk and high on goof balls, I was afraid they would, and if they beat me it might hurt my baby, even make me miscarry. So I finally said I would. But not with anyone watching. And Harry and Solly walked down to the edge of the lake and Joe Joe went up to watch for Paul. Then when we were alone, I let Frankie undress me and do it. I didn't even fight him. All I did was bawl."

The tic became more pronounced. "I hadn't wanted it to happen, but it had. So I tried to make the best of it. But then just when Frankie was about to—" She was embarrassed. "Well, you know what happens when men do *that* to you."

"Yes," Lou said, "I know."

Terry continued. "Well, just before he did, I got to thinking that letting him do *that* in me wouldn't be fair to *either* Paul or the baby. And even after Frankie had done it, I'd still have to go through the same thing with the three other cruds. "So I reached down and got my hand on a whiskey bottle that Frankie had in his pocket and hit him with it as hard as I could. Then I twisted out from under him and ran across the beach and up the stairs to my car and got the hell away from there."

"Leaving your playsuit and other things behind."

Terry nodded. "Everything but my sandals and my briefs." She wept silently. "And the only reason I had them was because after he'd fooled around a little, Frankie was so goddamn anxious to do it he didn't bother to take them off."

The blonde girl continued to weep. "Not that it mattered. Paul wouldn't have cared what any of them did to me. Because when I managed to borrow a dime and call him on the phone and tell him *why* it was so important I see him and *beg* him to *please* come pick me up, all he said was he'd been

afraid that was what I'd wanted to tell him and that was why he hadn't met me." She wept even harder. "Then he—he said he was ashamed of me."

Lou ran the fingers of one of her jeweled hands through her carefully coiffured hair. "Now let me get this straight, Terry. You're pregnant?"

"Yes."

"How long are you overdue?"

"Two months. Going on three."

"By a boy named Paul?"

"Paul Szabados. A boy I met at school. He's graduating this June and going to college in the fall. And I was going with him and I thought we'd have the baby there."

"It's definitely his child?"

"Yes. I haven't even dated any other boy since I met Paul."

"But when you told him you were pregnant by him, he said he was ashamed of you?"

"That's what Paul said. Then he hung up."

Lou sat on the stairs and cradled the weeping girl in her arms. "Go ahead. Bawl it out, honey. Then I think that you and I had better go inside and have a little talk."

"You won't tell the police I'm here?"

Lou ran the palm of one of her hands over the weeping girl's taffy-colored hair. "Oh, come off it, Terry. Make the scene. If you've read the newspapers you know who and what I am. As it said in one of the editorials, I am a prime and flagrant example of modern-day Chicago's infamous past. And whoever heard of a beat-up ex-madam blowing the whistle for the cops?"

Terry liked the cool, almost sensuous feel of the silk sheets on the queen-sized bed. She'd been so excited and happy about the baby she hadn't eaten a really decent meal for days and the two-inch-thick filet mignon that Mrs. Mason had insisted on broiling for her, plus the two glasses of chilled red wine she'd had with the steak, plus the two sleeping pills that Mrs. Mason had given her had left her with a sense of sleepy physical well-being she'd never experienced.

Lou, as she insisted she call her, couldn't have been nicer. Lou didn't think she was bad. Lou didn't care if she'd let a

boy get her pregnant, even if she wasn't married to him. Lou was on her side. She was going to arrange for her to have her baby and keep it, too, if she wanted to. And she did. After all, it wasn't the baby's fault that it was being born. And after she'd had her baby she wouldn't ever have to depend on her father for money again.

Lou hadn't been quite clear about that angle. It was the only thing that she hadn't spelled out. But Lou had told her that, with her looks and her figure, she wouldn't have to worry about money.

Terry fought, but not very hard, against the effect of the seconal. She remembered, vaguely, reading about things like this happening to other girls. In the stories she'd read some woman or some man had gotten a girl drunk, or had given her sleeping pills, and when the girl came to again, she found herself in the cabin of an ocean liner or in an airplane, enroute to a life of sin in a high-priced fancy house in Rio de Janeiro, or Buenos Aires, or even Hong Kong or Honolulu.

The thought that perhaps that was what Lou had in mind for her made Terry a little sad. She hadn't always been good, but she'd tried to be. She'd wanted to be good. But now that Paul had treated her the way he had, she couldn't *possibly* care less *what* happened to her. She *did* hope she wouldn't have to start work before her baby was born. Somehow that still didn't seem quite decent.

As her eyes grew more heavy-lidded, she continued her line of thought drowsily. Either way, when *she* was a famous whore and had a big, expensively furnished apartment like Lou's, and silk sheets on *her* beds, and her fingers were covered with diamonds, and *she* had two late-model Cadillacs standing in the parking area, which she didn't even bother to use, *then* Paul would be sorry.

Terry clutched the hand she was gripping even tighter. "You won't leave me, will you, Lou? You'll be with me when I wake up?"

The woman sitting beside her returned the pressure of her fingers. "I'll be here. Don't you worry about a thing, baby. You just leave everything to me."

Lou continued to sit on the bed beside the girl long after she was certain that Terry was asleep, reluctant to disengage their fingers, using her free hand to lift a stray wisp of hair

away from the girl's flushed cheek, fluff up her pillow a trifle, do a half dozen other fussy little things in the hope of making her more comfortable.

Lou didn't know whether to laugh or cry. She did know she was thinking the way that Terry talked, adding emphasis to certain words. It *was* fantastic the things that *could* happen to a woman. *All* she had started to do was put out a few empty milk bottles and *there* Terry had been.

It could be, Lou thought moodily, that the women who picked the coal miners' shacks filled with kids of their own had something going for them that didn't show on the surface, something very rare and precious, something that couldn't be purchased at Marshall Fields or Carson Pirie Scott's or Stevens'. She couldn't think of anything nicer than to have a daughter like Terry. If, in the days when such a thing was possible, she'd had a daughter like Terry, she wouldn't have had to lavish her love on foster children all over the world.

Lou was fiercely possessive as she studied the exquisitely defined features of the sleeping girl. And if she'd had a girl like Terry, instead of singing to Jesus about it, she would have seen to it that she was brought up right. She wouldn't have left her alone for a moment. No heavy-hung high-school punk would have stuck anything into any daughter of hers.

Once Terry had found someone whom she felt she could trust and who would understand, she hadn't held back a thing. The poor, crazy, lovable, mixed-up little kook had told her her whole sordid life story, from her first double chocolate pistachio-nut sundae to the \$49.50, marked down from \$62.80, eight-transistor AM-FM radio she'd bought as a happy-father-to-be present for the All City, football-playing, no-good son of a bitch who had gotten her pregnant.

"You see," Terry had confided earnestly, "I was *so* happy when the doctor told me I was pregnant, I just *naturally* thought that Paul would be." Then, just as earnestly, "But maybe Paul feeling the way he does is a judgment on me from God. Because, you see, Paul wasn't the first. I've let six other boys be intimate with me. No. Seven," she'd corrected herself. "That is, if I count the first one who talked me out of my cherry in a clump of sumac bushes on the edge of the revival tent lot."

Lou freed her hand from Terry's and passed her palm over her hair. There was no doubt about it. With a record like that the kid was bound straight for hell. There was only one flaw in her damnation: she would be very hungry when she got there. At the rate she was going, even if she had charged for the few pieces she'd put out, she couldn't have earned a living hustling in a fourth-rate panel house.

Lou thought a moment, then uncradled the phone on the night stand and dialed a number. The phone at the other end rang for a long time. When the connection was made, the voice of the man who answered was heavy with sleep.

"Phil Grecko here."

"This is Lou again, Phil," Lou said. "I hate to bother you again so soon, but there may be something you can do for me."

As with the Right Honorable Judge Harold Tyler Green, the man at the other end of the wire came instantly awake.

"I'm listening, Lou."

"Can you get in touch with Matt?"

"In five minutes. Maybe less."

"And you boys mean what you've always told me, that you'd do anything for me?"

"Anything," Grecko said simply.

Lou stretched out her free hand and stroked the satin-soft cheek of the blonde teenager sleeping in her bed. "Then contact Matt and get over here as fast as you can, will you, Phil? And you'd both better be carrying heat. I may want you to kill a punk. Or maybe just scare him to death. I haven't made up my mind yet. We'll talk it over when you get here."

"As fast as we can make it, Lou," the man at the other end of the phone connection said.

CHAPTER 22

The criminal courts have no jurisdiction over a defendant below the age of sixteen unless the crime charged is treason; murder in the first degree; and murder in the second degree. All other crimes committed by defendants sixteen years of age, or younger, are in the category of juvenile delinquency and are cognizable by the Children's Courts. . . .

ACT, SEC. 61, SUBD. 1:
Penal Law sec. 2186

There was nothing in particular on which Leo Rogers could put his finger, but his feeling of breathless anticipation, of waiting for some fresh and startling revelation, was as real as his feeling of impending disaster on the Memorial Day Sunday, some three weeks before, when this whole thing had started.

Rogers tried to define the feeling. He imagined he felt something like his fellow co-religionists must have felt while they'd been encamped around the base of Mt. Sinai, after the episode of the golden calf, waiting for Moses to come striding down off the mountain with the two new tables of laws that would, at least in part, shape the lives of everyone who'd been involved in the affair.

Then again it could be, he decided while he waited in the crowded corridor for the Juvenile Court hearing to convene, that he was still physically weak and therefore extraordinarily acute to impressions normally beyond the range of his mental perception.

The feeling had begun the day before, during Frenchy LaTour's hearing on the charge of assault with a deadly weapon. There had been practically nothing to it. It had simply been a formality.

It was generally agreed that the carnival man had been

at least morally justified in reacting the way he had. The boy he had shot had recovered. The State of Illinois had seen no reason to press the charge and the Honorable Judge Harold Tyler Green hadn't been able to get the case out of his court fast enough to suit him.

In a way, the hearing had been rather sad. It was almost as if LaTour's act of righteous indignation had been the last shot in the old man's locker.

"Thank you, Your Honor," the old man had whispered huskily when the charge against him had been dismissed. Then, instead of dropping into a bar with the rest of them to lift a few to justice, LaTour had meekly allowed his daughter-in-law to take him home to their new apartment.

"Yes, May. Of course, May. Whatever you say, May."

Rogers took his cigarettes from his pocket and lighted one. Then there had been the business about His Honor's reaction to Mrs. Mason when the former tenant of 101 had added her thanks to LaTour's.

"Yes. Thank you. Thank you very much, Your Honor," the old girl had beamed. "You're such a credit to the bench."

And His Honor had damn near died of apoplexy.

Rogers looked for and found Mrs. Mason in the crowd waiting in the corridor. As usual she was dressed to the nines, and practically glittering with diamonds. Her lightweight traveling suit was in the height of fashion. The orchid corsage she was wearing on her left shoulder had cost someone at least twenty dollars. In spite of the fact that for the past three weeks every newspaper in town had labeled her as one of the most notorious former madams that Chicago had ever known, he'd never seen anyone look happier.

There were so many things about the affair that still puzzled Rogers. Miss Daly was one of them. Rogers studied the schoolteacher's face. He'd always realized, vaguely, that for her type she was a lovely young woman. But somehow he'd always thought of her as bookish and rather shy and retiring.

Still here she was, as she'd been at the hearing on the day before, fairly glowing, and according to what Mike Adamowski had told him at lunch, willing if need be to sacrifice her anonymity and reputation in the interest of justice by

testifying in detail to the sexual assault on her person by the four boys in custody. What was more, everytime that she and Lieutenant Hanson looked at each other they lit up like State Street at Christmas.

Rogers was a bit resentful. Seemingly everyone but himself had come out of the incident smelling like a rose. That noon at lunch he'd learned of two more instances. Pleased by the stand he'd taken in defense of the sanctity of womanhood, one of the more prominent law firms in Chicago, specializing in criminal law, had made Adamowski a very attractive offer, conditioned only by the agreement that he and his wife give up some of their more liberal affiliations.

And the Garcias had barely been able to eat for enthusing over an offer the publicity had brought him. Just that morning they'd received a letter from the president of one of the largest sugar refineries in Honolulu, and an old friend of Señor Garcia, recalling some of their former deals and asking if, now that he had lost his own sugar interests, he would be willing to dispense knowledge and know-how on their behalf, this in an executive position commanding a substantial annual salary, plus bonus and stock inducements.

Rogers moved forward with the crowd as the doors of the hearing room opened and found a seat next to the little blonde bomb who had started the whole thing. "Miss Jones," he said rather formally.

The teenager smiled up at him happily. "You're way back of the times, Mr. Rogers. I've been married for three weeks." She introduced the broad-shouldered, rather sullen-faced youth sitting beside her. "Mr. Rogers, this is my husband, Paul Szabados. Paul, I'd like you to meet Mr. Rogers."

The youth didn't seem overjoyed to meet him but dutifully offered Rogers a muscular hand.

Terry continued to bubble. "We've kept it a secret from everyone but my father. We haven't even told the reporters. But now that school is out, we're going to Paris on our honeymoon."

"How nice," Rogers said.

Still beaming, Terry added, "Oh, yes," as she introduced the two well-dressed elderly men seated on the far side of her youthful husband. "And I'd like you to meet my husband's uncles, Mr. Riley and Mr. Grecko."

"How do you do," Riley nodded.

"Likewise I'm sure," Grecko said.

Rogers shook hands wondering why their faces seemed so familiar, then realized why. They were the two old men who had been Mrs. Mason's only callers.

Terry continued brightly. "They've been *so* nice to us." She confided to Rogers, "Paul was a little worried because he couldn't see just how he was going to be able to go to college in the fall and still get married. But Mr. Riley and Mr. Grecko have taken care of all of that. As a wedding present, because they believe in early marriage, they are going to pay Paul's tuition and all of our living expenses for the entire four years."

"Yeah. For the entire four years," Terry's youthful husband said rather grimly.

Terry added, "As well as paying for our honeymoon. And they may even visit us in Paris."

Riley said pointedly, "Well, of course, that all depends."

"That's right," Grecko agreed with him. "That all depends. But we may drop in on them just to make sure they have everything they need and that everything is all right. After we drop Lou off in Rome."

Things were coming too fast for Rogers. He parroted, "After you drop Lou off in Rome?"

"Yeah," Riley said. "A funny thing about that. You see the day that this all started, we dropped in on Lou to pay our respects on account of it was a holiday. And there she was feeling plenty bad because some Eyetalian orphan she adopted twenty-five years ago had cabled he was going to call long distance and she'd hoped he was going to ask her to come and have a nice long visit with him and his wife and their kids. But it seems all the lines were busy, and he hadn't called." Riley was indignant. "Then after they printed all those lies about her in the paper, you know, about when Lou was young, she was afraid he hadn't called because he was ashamed of her."

Grecko was a trifle smug. "So while Mr. Riley and myself retired from active business a number of years ago, we still have a few connections in Italy. And we asked a couple of our former associates to drop around this Pietro's pad and ask if he was sick or something. But we'd been right all along. It was just that the lines were busy and he hadn't been able to get through." Grecko was very pleased about

it. "And what do you know? Lou got a call from him just the other morning telling her how much Pietro loved her and how happy he and his wife and her grandchildren will be to see her. And please come to visit them and stay as long as she likes."

"How nice for Mrs. Mason," Rogers said. He started to ask just what their connection with her was but before he could, the clerk of the court rapped for order, the judge took his seat behind the desk, and two juvenile officers brought in the four boys.

It was miraculous, Rogers thought, what a freshly pressed suit and clean linen, and a little soap and water and a haircut could do for four boys. Any resemblance to the punks who had been in 303 when they'd broken down the door was purely coincidental. If he didn't know who they were, he wouldn't have recognized them. Moreover, their entire demeanor had changed. They were a seemingly bottomless well of polite "Yes, sirs" and "No, sirs."

He waited rather impatiently for the hearing to begin. But at the outset, instead of calling the first witness against them, the judge asked the attorney for the state and the attorneys representing the defendants to approach his bench, and he and the attorneys held an almost inaudible conversation for perhaps ten minutes.

Then when the attorneys returned to their tables they began to gather up their books and papers, and after he'd cleared his throat, the judge thanked the witnesses for appearing. However, he continued, their testimony wouldn't be necessary as all four boys had decided to plead guilty to the multiple charges against them and to abide by his sentence once he'd read all of the depositions on file and the usual probation investigations had been made.

Rogers leaned forward and tapped Adamowski on the shoulder. "Don't tell me he's going to let them off scott free?"

"No," the attorney said. "Throwing them on the mercy of the court is merely a smart move agreed upon by their lawyers. They don't want any part of a trial with you and Miss Daly testifying. This way the most that can happen to their clients is for them to be sent to a correctional institution until they're twenty-one."

Rogers leaned back and waited for something more to

happen. But a gavel banged and it was over. The juvenile officers led the boys out of the hearing chamber. The judge stood up back of his desk and lighted a cigarette. The defense attorneys conferred. Lieutenant Hanson and Miss Daly left the courtroom with one of her hands resting lightly on his arm. The Garcias followed closely behind them.

Feeling let down and very put-upon, Rogers walked out with the Adamowskis and Terry and her husband and the two men whom she'd introduced as his uncles.

This was justice? For this he'd taken a knife in the guts? For this he'd spent almost a month in the hospital?

In the corridor, Terry excused herself to go to the little girl's room. "It's the baby, I imagine," she confided happily. "I know it's just my imagination. But sometimes I even think I can feel him kick."

As Rogers stopped to light a cigarette, the happy bridegroom and his uncles walked on a few feet and the uncle named Riley said, "Now you be good to her, understand, boy?"

"All right!" the youth said hotly. "I'll be good to her. But now look, Mr. Riley and Grecko, or whatever your real names are. Let's get one thing straight. I love Terry. It was just everything came at me so fast and I was afraid I wasn't going to get to go to college and that folks would think I was yellow and getting married just to duck the draft. And when you guys walked in on me in the malt shop across from school, I was trying to get Terry on the phone and tell her how sorry I was for the way I'd acted and beg her to marry me. Because I want that baby just as bad as she does. But while I appreciate everything you've done, especially setting up that fund to pay my tuition and our living expenses until I can support my own family, if you guys are going to bird-dog us everywhere we go, you can take your goddamn money and shove it."

Still angry, the youth strode on down the corridor and stood, a picture of young marital felicity, waiting outside the door of the ladies' restroom for his wife.

"What do you think?" Riley asked.

Grecko shrugged. "Well, the kid sounded like he meant it. Okay. We'll let him breathe a little. But the first time he steps out of line—" He left it there.

"Okay," Riley agreed. "We'll let him breathe. But just as

a favor to Lou. If he steps out of line, he gets it. I'd just as soon shoot him as I would have shot Johnny Torrio."

Grecko was patient with him. "We *did* shoot Johnny Torrio. Who do you think pulled the trigger of that shotgun you were holding when you and me and Bugs blasted him right in his own doorway and put him in the hospital ward of Lake County Jail for nine months?"

"Yeah," Riley beamed. "That's right." He apologized, "But then I never was much good with a shotgun. Besides, you know how them Eytalians were. You never could trust them not to duck."

Grecko was a bit pontifical. "Oh, I don't know. Some Italians aren't so bad. Now you take our contact in Rome. He really must have laid it on the line when he talked to Pietro. He must have put the fear of God into the Wop. Lou's face lit up like the marquee of the State and Lake when she told us how nice Pietro had been to her over the phone."

Riley continued to beam. "Yeah. Lou sure was pleased."

When the two old men had walked on to join Mrs. Mason, Althea asked, "What do you suppose that was all about?"

"We'll probably never know," her husband said.

Rogers rode down in an elevator with the Adamowskis. To cross the broad walk to the cab stand they had to pass through a line of noisy pickets protesting something, just what wasn't quite clear from their placards.

When he recognized Althea, the long-haired, bearded picket captain stopped shouting long enough to offer her one of the two placards he was carrying. "Where the hell have you been these last few weeks?" he demanded. "Now take one of these and get in line and start shouting."

As the girl, almost unconsciously, reached for the wooden handle of the frame to which the placard was attached, Adamowski asked casually, "Do you happen to remember the circumstances of our first meeting, sweetheart?"

"Of course," Althea said. "Why?"

The lawyer told her. "Because if you even look like you're going to reach for that sign, I'm going to turn you over my knee right here and pull your skirts up and your pants down and wallop whatever shows until you can't say 'goddamn capitalistic fink' without lisping."

"You wouldn't dare."

"Try me."

Althea smiled rather wanly at the youth offering her the placard. "No, thank you. It seems I've just joined Pickets Anonymous."

Rogers shook hands with Adamowski and watched them drive away in a cab. He tipped his hat and wished bon voyage to a radiant Mrs. Mason as she and Riley and Grecko took a taxi to the airport to board their flight for Rome. He looked for Lieutenant Hanson and Miss Daly in the crowd but couldn't find them. He smiled and nodded to Terry and her new husband as they emerged from the building and walked arm in arm down the street toward his car.

For some reason he'd never felt more alone. For some reason he didn't want to go back, at least immediately, to the new, lonely, peopled-with-strangers, lake-front apartment he'd rented.

On impulse, he got into the next cab in line and instead of giving the driver his new address, he said quietly:

"196 East Westmore, please."

CHAPTER 23

SAVE!

Well-seasoned solid-oak doors, double-hung and casement windows . . . lavatories, bathtubs, fittings . . . assorted copper pipe . . . 2 by 4s, 4 by 4s, 4 by 8s, 8 by 8s . . . 12-by-12 heartwood structural beams as solid as the day they were milled. (You can't buy this kind anymore.) Tanks, boilers, valves . . . kitchen and bathroom cabinets . . . frames . . . three-story-high spiral stairs with metal risers . . . hand-rail . . . solid-walnut interior paneling . . . glass-lined water heaters . . . stoves . . . modern refrigerators. Will have plenty of used brick and building stones and broken tile when demolition is completed. All sales cash. All sales final. Contact Mr. Harris on job at 196 East Westmore any time after 7:20 A.M. this date.

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Standing as it was, all alone, cornered between the gaping jaws of the huge metallic clam shell and the great dangling steel ball, both waiting to be set into motion to crunch and batter at its once proud brownstone walls, the onetime private mansion looked somehow pathetic.

Ave Caesar, morituri te salutamus.

As the cab stopped in front of the building, Rogers asked the driver to wait. Then, barely glancing at the salable material that the advance wrecking crew had stacked in the paved parking area, he crossed the walk and made his way through the gaping hole in the masonry where the big double plate-glass door had hung.

As he entered the building Rogers unconsciously removed his hat. In a sense, he was attending a funeral. With the spiral stairway dismantled and only holes in the walls where

the doors of the separate apartments had been, the gutted brownstone front resembled a blowsy old dowager who'd had a belated hysterectomy and from whom, while they'd had her on the table, the surgeons had also removed all of her other vital organs. And the hollow shell had died.

He walked on into the rubble-filled hall that had once quickened to hundreds of footsteps, male and female, had known laughter and passion and pride. There was a story here, a good one. He knew some of it. If he was diligent and worked hard he thought that he could research and ferret out most of the rest.

He could title the book *Chicago*. Then just tell what he knew and what he could find out about the history of the building and its various tenants.

It should be an interesting if not an easy book to write. There'd been any number of books written about Chicago. But if he stressed the human equation, who knew? He might come up with something more than a pallid imitation of something dozens of other writers had written. But, of course, he would need a fairly catchy beginning, something to intrigue his readers and cause them to read on.

He stood for fifteen minutes absorbing the feel of the gutted building. Then, returning to his cab, he rode along the busy lake front to his new apartment trying to think of an intriguing opening.

As he unlocked his apartment door, he thought he had one. He stripped off his coat and put a pot of coffee on the stove. He made certain his dictionary, his volume of familiar quotations, and the latest *World Almanac* were handy. Then, after lighting a cigarette and making himself comfortable in his new posture chair, he rolled a yellow second sheet under the platen of his machine and his fingers moved rapidly over the keys of his typewriter as he wrote:

Chapter One

By the shore of Gitche Gumee,
By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
At the door of his wigwam,
In the pleasant Summer morning,
Hiawatha stood and waited.

All the air was full of freshness,
All the earth was bright and joyous. . . .

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW
The Song of Hiawatha

It was the season for heat. The past few days had been warm. The last of the snow was melted. The lilac and the snowball bushes were in bloom. Sunday morning dawned hot and clear. . . .

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It was the first scorcher of the season

The way Frankie the Beard, Joe Joe, Harry and Solly figured it, the blonde owed them something. She managed to get away from them on the beach, but that wouldn't happen again. Now they had the keys to her apartment . . . lots of ideas . . . and plenty of time.

When the door finally swung open, they were surprised to see a brunette—a shapely, real sweet innocent. She was only the next-door neighbor, but it was hot-as-hell outside and they'd been waiting a long time. An awfully long time. And with her just standing there in a negligee

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SIZZLE IN THE SUMMER HEAT
—IT EXPLODES!**